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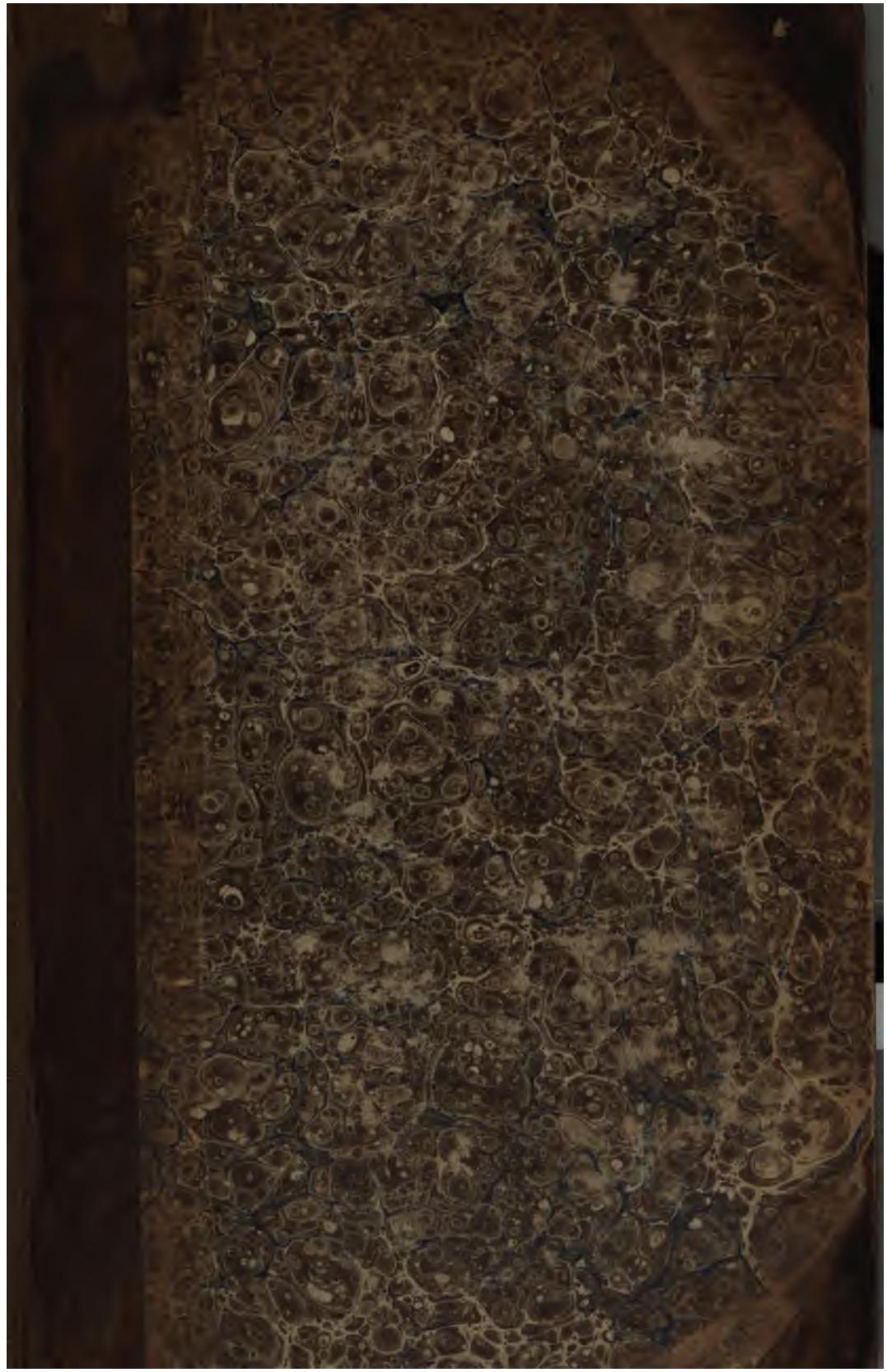
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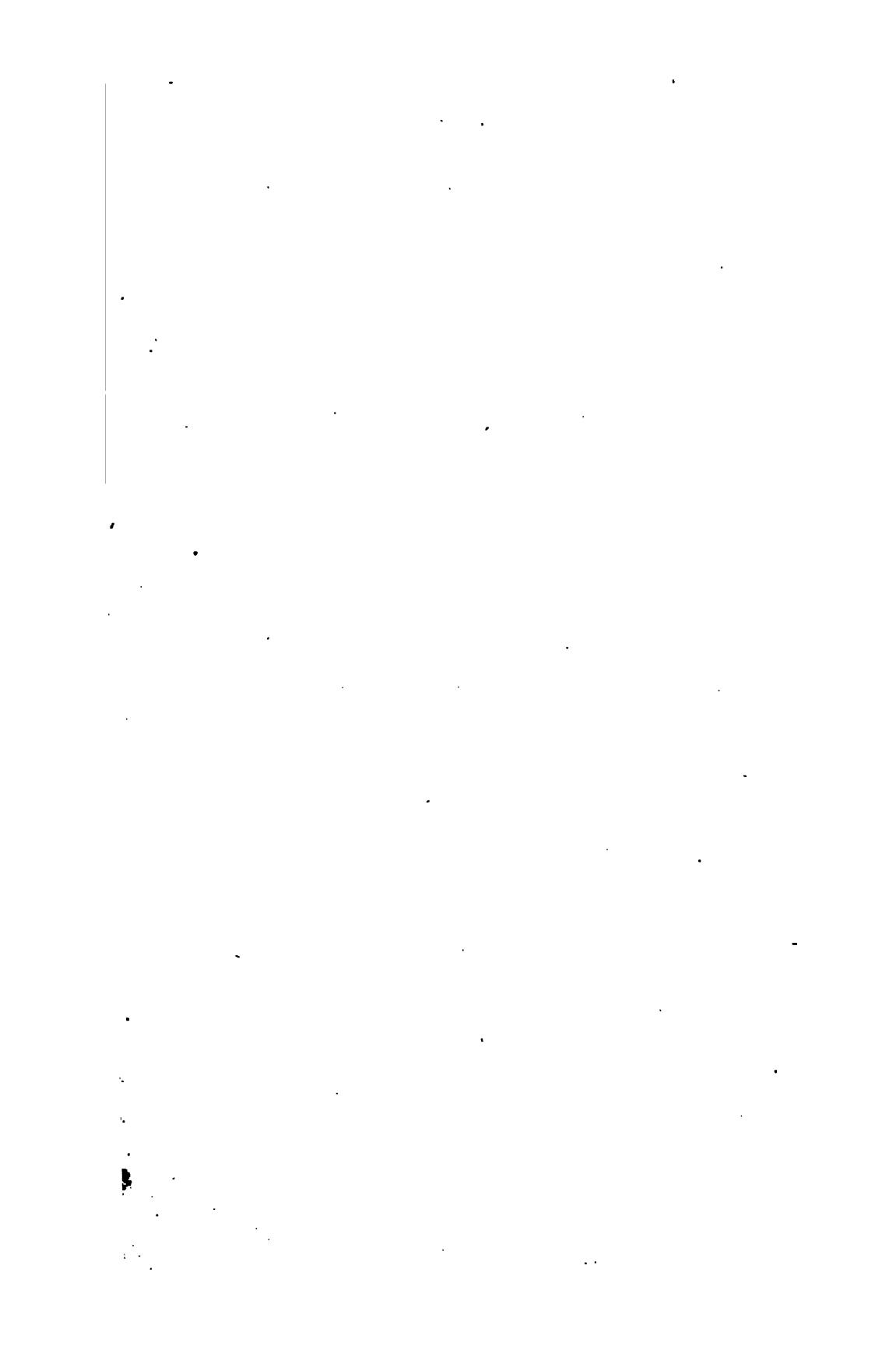
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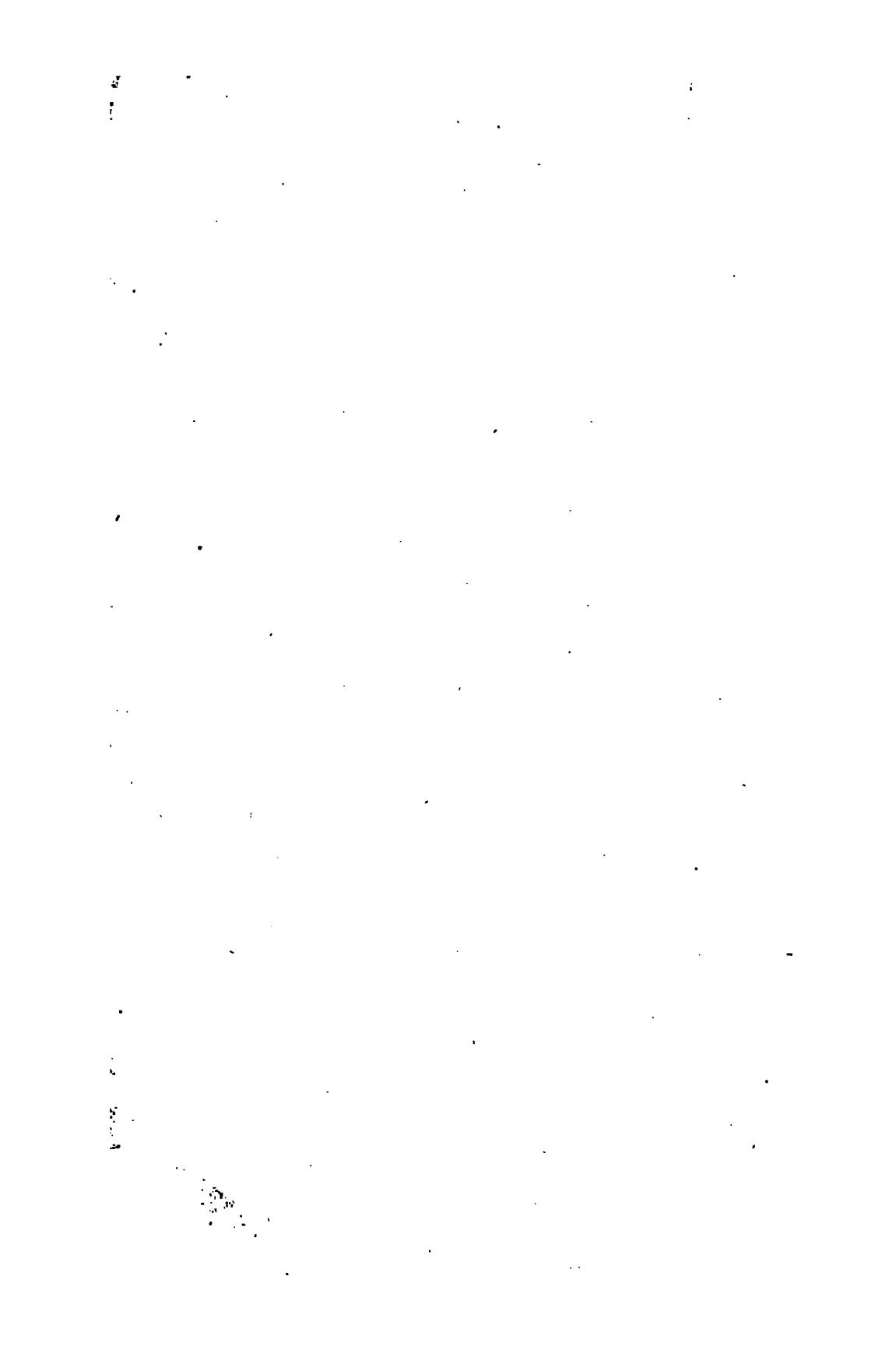
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THE
TRAGEDIES
OF
ÆSCHYLUS:
TRANSLATED
INTO
ENGLISH PROSE.



THE *v. 14. 1828.*

273

TRAGEDIES

OF

ÆSCHYLUS:

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH PROSE,

FROM THE

TEXT OF BLOMFIELD.

WITH NOTES.

OXFORD:

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PROMETHEUS.

B

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

STRENGTH.

FORCE.

VULCAN.

PROMETHEUS.

NYMPHS OF THE OCEAN.

OCEANUS.

IO.

MERCURY.

PROMETHEUS.

STRENGTH, FORCE, VULCAN, PROMETHEUS.

STRENGTH.

AT length we are come to the remotest¹ plain of earth—to the regions of Scythia, and its unpeopled solitudes. It is therefore your duty, O Vulcan, to fulfil the commands which the Father imposed on you, and to bind this malefactor to the lofty steeps of these rocks, in the indissoluble fetters of adamantine bonds. For having stolen your privileged ornament, the ray of all-inventive fire², he bestowed the gift on mortals. It is therefore fit that he should atone, by punishment, for such an offence against the Gods; that he may be taught to acquiesce in the sovereignty of Jupiter, and cease from displaying his benevolent disposition towards men.

VULCAN.

Strength, and Force³, the command of Jove, as far as regards you, is completed; and no further services remain:

(1) The vast and barren mountain of Caucasus, where the scene of this drama is laid, was supposed, in the times of the Poet, to be the utmost limit of the habitable globe. Later ages saw a fatal proof of the existence of populous countries even beyond this barrier; for it was through the wild passes of Derbent, or *Caucasia Portæ*, that the Huns poured, in such countless swarms, upon the devoted provinces of the Roman Empire.

(2) “At peractis omnibus, quæ constant ingenio, artem naturâ faciente, succurrit mirari, nihil paenè non igni perfici.”—*Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. xxxvi. c. 27.*

(3) “These two allegorical personages were of high antiquity and illustrious birth, the sons of Pallas and Styx. Cœus, the son of Ouranus and Gaia, was the father of Pallas by Eurybia, daughter of Pontus and Gaia: Styx was the daughter of Oceanus and Tethys. When Jupiter assembled the Gods on Olympus, and declared his gracious intention to reward

but I have no heart to bind a kindred God, by force, to these rifted and inclement rocks. Still there is a strong necessity that I should assume courage for the task; for it is dangerous to slight the commands of the Father. High-minded son of sagacious Themis¹, unwilling shall I rivet you unwilling, in the firm embrace of chains, to this desolate mountain; where you shall neither hear the voice nor see the form of any mortal²; but, scorched by the unclouded blaze of the sun, you shall lose the bloom of your complexion; and glad shall you be when the starry mantle of night shall hide the day, and when the sun shall again disperse the hoarfrosts of morning³; for the weight of present affliction shall ever wear you away; and he that shall alleviate your sufferings is not yet born⁴. Such is the recompence you receive for your friendly disposition towards men: for you, a God, not dreading the resentment of Gods, bestowed, unjustly, their honours on mortals. In punishment of these transgressions, you shall be fixed to the joyless station⁵ of this

and honour each that should be auxiliary to him in his wars against the Titans, Styx, by the advice of her father, was the first that attended him, leading with her these her two sons: Jupiter received her with great respect, appointed her to be the sacred oath of the Gods, and admitted her sons to be constant attendants on his own person."—POTTER.

(1) "Hesiodus Prometheus Iapeti et Clymenes; Apollodorus Iapeti et Asiae; Æschylus autem, patre non nominato, Themidis filium facit."—SCHÜTZ.

(2) The sufferings of the unhappy Prometheus are aggravated by being denied even the sympathy of mortals, for the sake of whom he despises the threats of Jupiter and braves the tortures of his ministers.

(3) "In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see."—Deut. xxviii. 67.

(4) Garbitius and the Scholiasts suppose that Vulcan here alludes to Hercules; but Schütz gives the meaning of the passage much more correctly: "Nemo planè in rerum naturâ est, qui te liberare velit aut possit."—The secret of his destiny was confined to Prometheus; and it is absurd, at any rate, to suppose that Vulcan could penetrate a futurity which was dark to Jupiter.

(5) "Sic v. 143. φρουρὸν ἄγηλον. Translationibus à re militari maximè delectatur Æschylus animosissimus poëta."—BUTLER.

rock, in upright posture, unvisited by sleep, and unable to recline your limbs; and many unavailing lamentations and complaints you shall utter; for the resolves of Jove may not be swayed by prayer; and every one is harsh whose power is newly acquired.

STRENGTH.—Enough: why do you delay, and express this vain compassion? Why do you not hate the God most detested by Gods, who betrayed your honour to mortals?¹

VULCAN.—Our kindred blood, and our ancient intercourse, are strong ties of friendship.

STRENGTH.—I agree with you: but how is it possible to disobey the command of the Father? Do you not fear this more?

VULCAN.—You are ever merciless, and full of audacity.

STRENGTH.—For there is no good in bewailing his fate; and do you cease to trouble yourself in vain with that which profits nothing.

VULCAN.—O skill of my hands, how much are you to be hated!

STRENGTH.—Why should you hate it? for your art, to speak the truth, is no cause of his present ills.

VULCAN.—Would, however, that it had been allotted to the possession of some other!

STRENGTH.—There is pain in every thing, except in bearing rule among the Gods; for no one is free, save Jupiter.

VULCAN.—I know it; and I have nothing to allege to the contrary of what you say.

STRENGTH.—Will you not, then, hasten to fasten the chains around him; that the Father may not behold you delaying in your task?

VULCAN.—See! here are his fetters lying ready².

(1) “*Incendere cupit Kρδτος Vulcanum, dum ei domesticam injuriam à Prometheo acceptam in memoriam revocat.*”—SCHÜTZ.

(2) Vulcan, it may be supposed, entered at the beginning of the scene,

“*Clavos trabales et cuneos manu
Gestans ahenā;*”—

but, disgusted with the cruel task imposed on him, he has indignantly flung the instruments of torture on the ground.

STRENGTH.—Take them, then ; and with all your force
clench them, with the hammer, on his hands, and rivet him
to the rocks.

VULCAN.—This work hastens to completion, and is not
delayed.

STRENGTH.—Strike harder, wrench firmer, and leave
him not in any quarter loose ; for he is skilful in devising
escape, even from difficulties that seem insuperable.

VULCAN.—This arm at least is fastened, so that it can
never get free.

STRENGTH.—Secure now the other, also, with its clasp,
that he may be taught how unequal are his devices to the
wisdom of Jove.

VULCAN.—Except this sufferer, no one can justly blame
my work¹.

STRENGTH.—Now drive with force, through his breast²,
the remorseless fang of the adamantine wedge.

VULCAN.—Alas ! alas ! Prometheus, I grieve on account
of your sufferings.

STRENGTH.—Do you again delay, and lament for the
enemies of Jove ? Beware, lest you have yet cause to
sorrow for yourself !

VULCAN.—You see a spectacle fearful for the eye to look on.

STRENGTH.—I see this traitor only rewarded with what
he deserved. But proceed, and fasten around his sides
these iron girths.

VULCAN.—I am compelled to perform this task : do not
urge me unnecessarily.

STRENGTH.—But I will urge you ; nay more, and chide
you.—Descend lower, and force the rings on his legs.

(1) “ Dicit adeò se benè vinxisse Prometheum, ut nemo queri possit
præter eum qui vinctus erat : in cuius perniciem sc. cedebat ars Vulcani,
et in quem suæ artis specimen patienti grave, ediderat.”—STANLEY.

(2) Butler, in opposition to Schütz and Blomfield, translates *στέρνων*
διαυγάδες, *across his breast*. Not only is the literal meaning of the word
against him, but the expressions of compassion which immediately follow
from Vulcan make it probable that it was the severer torture that was
employed.

VULCAN.—This work, too, is finished without long toil.

STRENGTH.—Drive now, with force, the fetters through his feet; for the overseer of this work is stern.

VULCAN.—Your tongue utters sentiments that accord with your shape.

STRENGTH.—Be you as merciful as you please; but do not reproach me with my resolute nature and sternness of disposition.

VULCAN.—Let us go; for he has the toils around his limbs.

STRENGTH.—Here, now, display your insolence; and pilfering the honours of the Gods, confer them on mankind!—From which of these toils are mortals able to relieve you?—The Deities have falsely bestowed on you the name of Prometheus; for you yourself have need of a Prometheus, to devise the means by which you may be extricated from the art that has bound you¹.

PROM.—O divine æther, and light-winged breezes, and fountains of rivers, and Ocean smiling with its countless waves²; and Earth our universal mother, and orb of the Sun that surveys all Nature³! to you I make my appeal. Behold what indignities I, a God, suffer from the Gods! Mark by what tortures racked I must endure their agony, for innumerable years⁴; and what ignominious bonds the Ruler of the Gods hath devised to constrain me!—Alas! alas! I groan both for my present and my coming ills⁵. Oh! when is it fated that the close of these sorrows shall

(1) This passage is to be construed, in the original: *αὐτόν σε δεῖ Προμηθεὺς, ὃς ἀν προμηθεύσατο ὅτῳ τρόπῳ, &c.*

(2) “Refertur ad levem sonum undarum ventis exagitatarum, qui etiam aliquantulum crispant maris dorsum quasi amabili quādam γελασίᾳ.”

—STANLEY.

(3) “Omnia qui video, per quem videt omnia tellus,
Mundi oculus.”—*Ovid. Met. IV. 227.*

(4) “Supple κατὰ, tempore infinito, vel, δθλεύσω χρόνον, tolerabo, et magnâ cum difficultate perferam, et superabo temporis diuturnitatem immensum.”—GARR.

(5) “Nec videt interea qui terminus esse malorum
Posit, nec quæ sit poenarum denique finis.” *Lucret. III. 1033.*

appear?—And yet, what do I say? I clearly know, before its time, every thing that is to come, nor can any suffering reach me unforeseen. But it becomes me to bear my doom as calmly as possible, since I know that the force of necessity may not be resisted. It is thus impossible for me to speak, nor yet to refrain from speaking of my calamities; for I am enthralled as the wretched victim of this inevitable doom, because I gave to men the honours of the Gods. My search discovered the fount of fire¹, whose stolen treasures filled the cane²; and which being made known to man, hath taught him every art, and opened to him infinite resources. By such a punishment I now atone for my transgressions, being here rivetted with chains, beneath an inclement sky. But, ah! what sound, what odour³ faintly approaches me, proceeding from divinity, or from mortal, or from an union of these natures? Does some Being seek this hill on the verge of the world, to behold my sufferings, or by what other purpose impelled? Behold in his bondage an ill-fated God, the enemy of Jove, and one who hath incurred the hatred of all the Gods that frequent the courts⁴ of Jove, on account of his rash affection for mortals. Alas! alas! what is this flut-

(1) “Scribit Theophrastus, idcirco dici Prometheum hominibus disse ignem cœlo deroptum, quia philosophiam ac lumen vitæ intellectus, quæ divina est, mortalibus invexit.” *Ex Cic. Tusc.* V.—MORELL.

(2) Martial, in an epigram on the cane, alludes to this ingenious device of Prometheus:

“Invisæ nimirum pueris gratæque magistris
Clara Prometheo munere ligna sumus.”

Hesiod and Apollodorus give the same circumstantial account of the fraud; and, except Theophrastus believed that there was philosophy in a flogging, we cannot fancy how he managed to allegorize this part of the story.

(3) “Credebant scilicet antiqui benigniora Numina odorem gratum fundere.—*Virg. En. L.* 403:

“Anibrosiæque comæ divinum vertice odorem
Spiravere.”—

GIACOMELLI.

(4) “Non temerè dicit; sed ut ostendat illam subitam et universalem, quæ est in aulicis, pro indignatione et gratiâ magnatum erga aliquem.”—GARR.

tering of winged forms that I again hear near me? The air gently murmurs with the light pinions that fan it: but every thing that approaches inspires me with fear.

CHORUS.

Fear nothing; for it is in friendship that our winged band hath approached this hill with the rivalry of speed, having with difficulty persuaded to our wishes the mind of our father: but swiftly have the breezes wafted me on my way; for the echoing clang of iron penetrated the depths of our caverns, and banished from my cheek the blush of reserve; and hither have I rushed, unsandalled¹, in my winged car².

PROM.—Alas! alas! ye daughters of fruitful Tethys, sprung from her embraces with your father Oceanus³, who pours around the whole world his restless streams, here turn your eyes, and behold by what a chain clasped I shall keep no enviable watch on the highest peaks of this cleft rock!

CHORUS.—I see, O Prometheus! and the cloud of fear hath settled on my eyes, filling them with tears, as I behold your body withering away on the rocks in the tor-

(1) Potter informs us, on his own authority, that “the Nymphs of the Waters wore no sandals.” In this case, it would have been very idle in the Chorus to have mentioned to Prometheus that they came to visit him in their usual undress. It is quite obvious, that they simply mean to express the haste of their departure from Ocean; and that they would have come with their sandals, had not their affectionate alarm forbidden them to delay.—In like manner *Theocritus*, *Idyl.* xxiv. 36:

Ἄυστα, μηδὲ πόδεσσι τεῦς ὑπὸ σάνδαλα θεῖης.

(2) No fears be thine: a kind intent
 Our winged speed from Ocean bent.
 Soon as our sire's consent was wrung,
 Away upon the breeze we sprung;
 Unsandalled in my haste I came,
 For pity conquered virgin shame,
 When through our caverns rang the shock
 Of iron on the rifted rock.

(3) “Duxerat Oceanus quondam Titanida Tethyn,
 Qui terram liquidis qua patet ambit aquis.”

Ov. Fast. iv. 81.

tures of these adamantine bonds: for new Rulers bear sway in Olympus; and Jove, without regard to justice, maintains his power by laws of his own invention, setting at nought all that was in earlier time revered.

PROM.—Would that he had sent me beneath the earth, and the mansions of the dead in Hades, to the boundless Tartarus, having forced upon me cruel and indissoluble bonds, so that neither a God nor any other might have exulted in my misery! But now I, wretched, the sport of the winds¹, endure calamities that give joy to my enemies.

CHORUS.—Who of Gods is so hard-hearted as to experience joy at your sufferings? Who is there, except Jove², who does not sympathize with your sorrows? But he, ever sternly displaying an inflexible spirit, compels to submission the race of heaven; nor will he cease, until he have satiated his heart, or some other shall acquire by stratagem the difficult possession of his throne.

PROM.—The Ruler³ of the Gods, however, shall yet have need of me, though now enduring torture in these stubborn chains, to reveal to him the new counsel by which he shall be deprived of his sceptre and his honours. But neither shall he soften my purpose by the charms of persuasion's honeyed words; nor shall I, through dread of his violent threats, disclose what he wishes, until he release me from these cruel fetters, and be willing to make atonement for this wanton wrong.

CHORUS.—You, indeed, are both bold, and do not in the slightest degree yield to your bitter sufferings, but vent too freely your indignation. The thrilling emotions of fear, therefore, distract my soul; and I tremble for your fate in uncertainty of the time when it is destined that you

(1) " Each on his rock transfix'd, the sport and play
Of racking whirlwinds."— *Paradise Lost*, II. 181.

(2) "Δίξα δὲ Διός. Σι νιμιρύν ἀ Ιούε δισσερισ! γέεστ σκιλιετ." SCHÜTZ.
— "Errat vir doctus, Δίξα γέ Διός reddendum est potiūs, uno tamen
excepto Jove, vel, si Jovem saltēm exceperis." BUTLER.

(3) The term *πρύτανις* is applied contemptuously; as if he had said,
" This Magistrate of the Gods."

shall behold in the harbour of safety the close of these afflictions: for the son of Saturn has a disposition that yields not to mercy, and a heart whose purpose may not be bent by prayer.

PROM.—I know that Jupiter is harsh, and controuls justice according to his own will; but still he shall, on some future day, bear a more humble mind, when he shall have been crushed beneath the doom I foresee: then shall he subdue the violence of his rage, and eagerly join with my eager wishes in hastening to friendship and reconciliation.

CHORUS.—Disclose, and plainly declare to us, the whole tale; in what crime Jupiter having detected you, thus ignominiously and cruelly tortures you. Make it known to us, provided you are not injured in any respect by telling what we ask.

PROM.—The tale is both painful for me to tell, and painful to conceal, and full of grief in every way it can be viewed. From the first moment that wrath was kindled in heaven¹, and discord awoke among its different Powers,

(1) There have been various accounts given of the early dissensions in heaven; but on the whole, it appears that Saturn, for whom Prometheus expresses so much compassion, was the first cause of all the mischief. Without any good reason, he armed himself one day with a scythe, and, having mowed off the legs and arms of his father Ouranus, ended by dismembering his government as well as his person. He had not been long seated on the throne, when he discovered, that he was fated, in like manner, to lose its possession by the rebellion of one of his own children. With the view of preventing this unpleasant retaliation, he made it a practice to devour his offspring as fast as Rhea produced them. The Gods were disgusted, when they observed the iniquitous diet of their Ruler; and murmured (as Plato has expressed it in his *Euthyphron*) *ἢ τοὺς νιοὺς κατέτρωπον οὐκ εὐδίκη*. Rhea, of course, was particularly dissatisfied with his unparental behaviour; and in place of Jupiter, Pluto, and Neptune, of whom she was delivered at a birth, she contrived to give her husband three large stones, which he masticated with great satisfaction, and without having any suspicion of the clumsy device of his consort. It was high time that a God whose faculties were in this state should relinquish the reins of government; and Jupiter accordingly ejected him, by the process which Prometheus relates.

some wishing to dispossess Saturn of his throne that Jupiter forsooth might reign, and others on the contrary striving that Jupiter might never obtain command over the Gods, then I, having formed the wisest counsels, endeavoured, but in vain, to persuade the Titans, the offspring of Ouranus and Terra ; for they, despising, in their stubborn pride, the craft of my skilful designs, thought that without difficulty they should gain by their force the sovereign power. But my mother Themis and Terra¹, one being distinguished by many names, had foretold to me, more than once, in what way the future event should be decided ; that it was not by strength or force, but by guile, that it was fated for those who conquered to prevail ; and yet, though I explained to them the method by my words, they would not deign to pay me any regard. It therefore seemed to me best, in these circumstances, to take my mother along with me, and join, a willing and welcome ally, in assisting Jove : and by my counsels the dark and deep abyss of Tartarus encloses the ancient Saturn², with all who fought on his side. The Ruler of the Gods, after having received such benefits at my hands, requites me with these cruel punishments in return : for the distrust of friends is a malady that is somehow inherent in absolute power³. But, as to what you ask, on what ground of accusation he tortures me, I will now make this clear to you. As soon as he had taken his seat on his father's throne, he immediately distributes various honours to various Gods, and assigns to each, in order, the extent of his power : but of wretched mortals he took no account ; and designed, after having annihilated the whole race, to plant

(1) Themis is represented in the Eumenides (v. 3) as the daughter of Terra.

(2) Homer has in like manner assigned this dismal abode to Saturn :

—— Ίν' Ἰαρετός τε Κρόνος τε
“Ημενοί, οὐτ' αὐγῆς “Τπερλονος ἡλίου
Τέρποντ’, οὐτ’ ἀνέμοισι· βαθὺς δέ τε Τάρταρος ἀμφίς. Il. θ. 479.

(3) “ In ethicis sententias ubique Æschylum noscas, hominem nempè, Atheniensem, liberæ republicæ civem, fortem, prudentem.”—JO. MÜLLER.

a new kind in their place. No one opposed these purposes, except me: but I had courage for the task, and saved mortals from descending to Hades by a violent destruction. It is therefore that I am bowed beneath these sufferings, which are painful to be endured, and melancholy to be seen. I, who displayed pity for mortals, am not considered worthy of pity in my turn; but have here, without mercy, been enchain'd—a spectacle that reflects little honour on Jove.

CHORUS.—He is of iron mind, and formed from the rock, whoever, O Prometheus, sympathizes not with your sorrows: for I would rather that I had not seen such horrors; and seeing them, I have been grieved in my soul.

PROM.—Yes, I am indeed a mournful spectacle for my friends.

CHORUS.—Did you not, in some respects, proceed even farther than you have told?

PROM.—I was the cause that mortals ceased from fore-seeing their fate¹.

CHORUS.—Having discovered what remedy for this pest?

PROM.—I implanted blind hopes² in their bosoms.

CHORUS.—You bestowed, in this, a mighty benefit on men³.

PROM.—In addition to these gifts, I furnished them with fire⁴.

(1) “ Prudens futuri temporis exitum
Caliginosâ nocte premit deus.” *Hor. Lib. III. Od. xxix.*

(2) “ An, quibus mortales esse obliviscimur, rerum gerendarum utendrumque vani in longum prospectus? An mavis cultiores de immortalitate obscuram expectationem cepisse? Nam spes, quam fraudem, laborioso generi in beneficium contulisse videri mallet.”—*Jo. MÜLLER.*

“ Posteriorem interpretationem utpote elegantissime et exquisitissime excogitatum, amplectimur, præsertim cum mythologiâ apprimè conueniat; de quâ vide *Dram. Pers.*”—*BUTLER.*

(3) ‘Α γὰρ δὴ πολύπλοκυτος ἐλπίς
Πολλοῖς μὲν δυνησις ἀνδρῶν. *Soph. Antig. v. 625.*

(4) “ Audax Iapeti genus
Ignum fraude malâ gentibus intulit.” *Hor. Lib. I. Od. iii.*

CHORUS.—And do the creatures of a day now enjoy the bright radiance of fire ?

PROM.—Yes ; and from that possession they shall acquire the knowledge of many arts.

CHORUS.—Is it for such causes of complaint that Jupiter tortures you, and never grants you a respite from misery ? Is there no limit of suffering appointed for you ?

PROM.—No ; there is no other, than when it shall seem good to him.

CHORUS.—But how shall it seem good to him ? What hope can you entertain ? Do you not see you have erred ? But how you have erred, it were neither pleasant for me to tell, and would be painful for you to hear. Let us forbear this subject ; and do you seek some means of escape from your sufferings.

PROM.—It is easy for him who enjoys a path apart from calamity, to admonish and advise the victim of an unhappier fate¹. But I knew all that awaited me. Of my own accord I erred, I will not deny it. In relieving mortals, I brought suffering on myself. I did not dream, however, that I should be wasted away, by such a punishment, on these lofty rocks, being fixed to this desolate and unfrequented hill.—And yet, do not lament my present afflictions ; but, descending to the plain, hear my coming misfortunes, that you may learn thoroughly the whole that awaits me. Obey me, obey me, and bestow your sympathy on the griefs that now oppress me ; for in the same way, Misfortune, in her varying course, now takes up her abode with one, and now with another².

CHORUS.—You have urged this request, O Prometheus, on those who are willing to comply with it : and now, forsaking with lightfoot my rapid car, and the pure air through

(1) “Hei mihi ! quam facile est, quamvis hoc contigit omnes
Alterius luctu fortia verba loqui.”

Ovid. Eleg. in Drusum, v. 9.

“Facile omnes, cum valemus, recta consilia segrotis damus.”

Terent. Andr. II. 1.

(2) *Vid. Blomf. Gloss.* 283.

which the birds wing their flight, I will approach to this rocky soil; for I am anxious to hear fully of all your sufferings.

OCEANUS.

I am come to you, Prometheus! having reached the goal of a lengthened journey, and having directed, without need of the bit, the swift flight of this bird¹ by instinct². But know that I sympathize in your misfortunes; for both the tie of kindred³, I think, constrains me to such feeling; and even without considering that our blood is the same, there is no one to whom I should be inclined to accord a greater share of affection than to you. But you shall know that these words are true, and that it is not in my nature to use kind language with hollow purpose: for come now, tell me in what it is of consequence for me to aid you, and you shall never have reason to say that you have a more staunch friend than Oceanus.

PROM.—Ha! how is this? Are you also come to behold my sufferings? How have you ventured, having left the stream that bears your name, and its caves wrought by nature in the o'er-arching roek, to approach to⁴ Earth, the mother of iron? Have you come to contemplate my misfortunes, and to sympathize in my sorrows? Lo, then, behold the friend of Jove, the ally who established his throne, beneath what a weight of woe I am bowed by his command!

OCEANUS.—I see, O Prometheus; and, wise⁵ as you are,

(1) The wild and marvellous scenes of this play are puzzling to a French comprehension. Brumoy is particularly distressed at the manner in which Oceanus thinks fit to travel: “ Il paroît monté sur je ne sais quel animal ailé; bizzarrie inexplicable.”

(2) Vid. Blomf. Gloss. 295; where we prefer the latter interpretation. The remark of Schütz will apply to either: “ *Admirationis enim augendæ causa, non brutus, sed mente ac ratione prædictus esse fingitur.*”

(3) Iapetus, the father of Prometheus, was the brother of Oceanus.

(4) Or “ this Earth,” as denoting Scythia, from which the Chalybians first extracted iron.

(5) Τίκτε δ' ὑπερκύδαντα Μενοίτιον, ηδὲ Προμηθέα
Ποικίλον, αἰολόμυγτιν.——

Hes. Theog. v. 510.

I wish to give you the best advice. Know yourself, and adopt new manners; for there is a new King among the Gods. If you shall thus vent harsh and indignant words, perhaps Jupiter, though seated so far on high, may hear you; so that the present sufferings which his wrath has imposed shall appear as sport¹ in comparison of the future. But banish, O wretched being! the fierce spirit you now bear, and seek a release from these afflictions. Perhaps what I urge upon you may seem old-fashioned; but such, however, are the rewards, O Prometheus, of the tongue that uses too haughty language: for you are not yet humble, nor submissive to your misfortunes, but seem inclined to draw down others in addition to the present. You will not, if you follow my counsel, kick against the pricks², seeing that a severe and absolute monarch holds the power. And now, indeed, I go; and I will try, if I be able, to free you from these sufferings. But do you remain quiet, and not give too free reins to your tongue. Do you not, with all your wisdom, well know, that punishment is inflicted on the imprudent tongue³?

PROM.—I consider you enviable; because you have escaped the blame, though you shared all my plans, and dared equal attempts⁴. But now leave me to my fate, nor let my release be a care to you; for assuredly you shall not persuade him, since his purpose is not easily changed. But do you look out for yourself, lest you suffer any harm in consequence of this journey.

(1) “Παιδίαν, *Child's play.* Græcorum proverbium est, cùm duorum alterum alteri longè anteponunt, παιδία φαύνορο ἀν εἶναι, vel λῆπος ut docet Casaub. *Animadv. ad Athenæum*, p. 70.”—JAC. TATE.

(2) See Act. Apost. ix. 5.—and *Pind. Pyth.* II. 173.

ποτὶ κέντρον δὲ τοι
Λακτίζεμεν, τελέθει
Ολιοθρόδοιμος.—

(3) 'Αχαλίνων στρομάτων
'Ανθρού τ' ἀφροσύνας
Τὸ τέλος δυστυχία. *Eurip. Bacch.* v. 385.

(4) “In omnibus, quæ egerat Prometheus, adjutorem sibi habuerat Oceanum. Quarè hic miratur quod eum non punierit Jupiter, ut nunc puniebatur ipse. Nescio an alii Mythologi idem dicant.”—PAUW.

OCEANUS.—You are much better skilled by nature to school others than yourself. I draw my certain proof of this from fact, and not merely from words. But you shall by no means divert me from the purpose I am so eager to pursue: for I trust, I confidently trust, that Jove will grant me this boon, so as to release you from these sufferings.

PROM.—I praise, and shall never cease to praise you, for your intentions; for you shew no lack of zeal in my service. But spare yourself the trouble; for your labour, however willing you might be to bestow it, would be thrown away, and be of no profit to me. Rather remain quiet, and keep yourself out of the danger; for though I am myself in adversity, I would not on this account wish my misfortunes to extend to numbers of others. Oh, surely no! for already I am deeply pained by the sufferings of my brother Atlas, who stands in the regions of the West, supporting on his shoulders the pillar of heaven and earth¹, no easy burden for the arms. And I was moved to pity, as I saw subdued by force the earthborn inhabitant of the Cilician caves², the monster hostile to heaven, impetuous Typhon of the hundred heads, who opposed the Gods in fight, breathing slaughter from his horrid jaws; and from his eyes there flashed an appalling glare, as if he were about to overthrow by force the empire of heaven. But the sleepless bolt of Jupiter smote him—the down-descending thunder with its breath of flame, which quickly drove him from such haughty boasts: for being stricken to the very soul, his strength was reduced to ashes, and blasted by the power of the thunder; and now his helpless form lies outstretched near the straits of the sea, crushed beneath the roots of Ætna³. But Vulcan, seated on the summits of

(1) Ἄτλας δὲ οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἔχει κρατερῆς ὑπὸ δυάγκης,
Πείρασιν ἐν γαῖης, πρόπτερον Ἐσπερίδων λιγυφέδνον.

Hes. Theog. v. 517.

(2) Pindar describes his residence in nearly the same words, *Pyth.* I. 31.

(3) In the first Pythian Ode, to which we have just referred, the body

the mountain, forges the glowing mass; whence, in after-times, shall rivers of fire be disgorged, to devour, with their fell jaws, the level meads of fair and fertile Sicily¹. Typhon, though reduced to ashes by the thunderbolt of Jove, will thus pour forth his rage in the fiery darts of a resistless and fire-breathing tempest.—But you are not ignorant, from want of experience; nor do you require me to warn you. Save yourself, then, by such means as you know how to use; and I will endure my present fortune, until his wrath subside in the spirit of Jove.

OCEANUS.—Are you not aware, O Prometheus, that reasoning has a power to heal the distempers of passion?

PROM.—It has, if one shall soften the heart at the proper season, and not reduce by force the swellings of anger.

OCEANUS.—Tell me, do you see any harm in foresight and in daring?

PROM.—Superfluous toil, and unreflecting folly.

OCEANUS.—Suffer me to be afflicted with this malady, since it is best that one who counsels wisely should not appear to be wise.

of Typhon is described as extending even to the shores of Italy: and Ovid (*Metamorph.* V. 346.) has indulged in a similar strain of poetical exaggeration:—

“ Vasta giganteis ingesta est insula membris
Trinacris; et magnis subjectum molibus urget
Æthereas ausum sperare Typhoëa sedes.
Nititur ille quidem, pugnatque resurgere sœpè:
Dextra sed Ausonio manus est subjecta Peloro;
Læva, Pachyne, tibi; Lilybæo crura premuntur;
Degravat Ætna caput, sub quâ resupinus arenas
Ejectat, flammamque fero vomit ore Typhoëus.
Sœpè remoliri luctatur pondera terræ,
Oppidaque et magnos evolvere corpore montes.”

(1) Æschylus spent the latter part of his life in Sicily, at a time when the eruptions of Ætna were very frequent and violent. Müller has therefore remarked, with justice: “ Sic ultimum hanc tragœdiam suspiceris laborem; quo etiam facto ad omnes homines, quâ ad Atticos ritus et Græcos heroas magis pertinet. *Senis vividissima mens, tanto operi par, admirationem inquit.*”

PROM.—This will appear to be my fault.

OCEANUS.—Your words plainly direct that I should return home.

PROM.—Because I am afraid, lest the compassion you have expressed for me should involve you in enmity.

OCEANUS.—Do you mean, with him who has lately taken his seat on the throne of omnipotent command?

PROM.—Beware, lest his heart be displeased.

OCEANUS.—Your calamity, O Prometheus, is a warning to me.

PROM.—Away! depart! preserve your present sentiments.

OCEANUS.—You have enjoined these commands on me as I am hastening to return; for the quadruped bird already grazes with his wings the liquid path of air, and gladly will he recline his limbs in his native stalls of Ocean.

CHORUS.—I pity you, O Prometheus, on account of your calamitous fortune; and a stream of tears, descending from my fast-flowing eyes, bedews my cheek with the liquid gush of sorrow: for Jupiter, commanding this harsh doom by virtue of his own laws, wields a haughty sceptre over the Gods who preceded him in power. Already hath the whole land uttered the voice of sorrow, lamenting the boasted pride and ancient dignity of thy honour and that of thy kindred; and all the mortals who inhabit the regions that extend over sacred Asia sympathize in your deeply-mournful sufferings; both the virgins, undaunted in fight, who dwell in the Colchian land; and the tribes of Scythia who occupy around the Lake Maeotis the remotest regions of earth; and the warlike flower of Arabia¹, who

(1) In an able article on Blomfield's edition of this play, in the Edinburgh Review, No. 33, the critic has himself favoured us with the following note:—"Cum tota Chori oratio in Maris Euxini accolis recensendis versetur, jure mirantur interpres, unde haec Arabiae mentio. Nonnulli ad emendationem configuunt, quorum conjecturas memorare supersedeo. Magis placet Butleri sententia, qui ostendere conatur nomen Arabiae latius olim quam vulgo creditur patuisse. Sed nolim hanc questionem nimis curiosè tractare. Nam verisimile est Æschylum geographiæ nihilo peritiorem fuisse tragico nostrate, qui oram Bohemiæ maritimam memorat."

have their home and country amid the lofty precipices that border on Caucasus—a martial band, that rush with fury to the conflict of the pointed spear. I have before seen only one other God subject to the tortures of adamantine bonds—the Titan Atlas; who ever, exerting transcendent strength, supports on his shoulders, with groaning toil, the solid pole of heaven. The billows of the sea moan, as they dash together; its depths murmur; the dark abyss of Orcus sends forth, from beneath the earth, a troubled sound; and the fountains of sacred streams wail as they flow, for thy anguish and thy sorrow.

PROM.—Do not think that I am silent through pride or a stubborn spirit; but, seeing myself thus ignominiously treated, I am pained by the reflections of my mind: for who, but I, entirely distributed their honours to these new Gods? But, as to these favours, I am silent, for I should relate to you what you know: but listen to the evils that existed among mortals—how I implanted in them, who were before in the ignorance of infancy, the power of intellect, and the capability of knowledge¹: and I will tell you the tale, not to reflect any blame on men, but to explain my kind intention in the gifts I bestowed on beings who, at first, had eyes and saw not; ears had they, and heard not²; but, like to the shapes of dreams³, left for long their whole course of life to chance and confusion, and neither knew how to construct houses of brick with their fronts to the sun, nor yet the art of working in wood; but dwelt beneath the earth, like the tiny ant, in the sunless depths of caves⁴: and

(1) Prometheus only claims for himself the merit of having taught civilization and the use of reason to mankind, and does not at all allude to the common fable of his having actually formed the original race from clay. In the former character he was worshipped by the Athenians along with their tutelary Goddess; and his temple, in the Academia, received equal honours.

(2) See *Isaiah* vi. 9. *Matt.* iii. 13, 14.

(3) ——————“We are such stuff

As dreams are made of.”————— *Shak. Tempest*, Act. IV.

(4) “Laterarias domos constituerunt primi Euryalus et Hyperbius fratres Athenis; anteā specus erant pro domibus.” *Plin.* vii. 56. The same

they knew no certain sign of winter, or of flowery spring or of fruitful summer, but pursued all their occupations without discernment, until I explained to them the risings of the stars and their mysterious settings. Besides, I first discovered for them numbers, the highest of inventions¹; and the structure of a written language; and Memory, the mother of the Muse, effective in every art. And I was the first who bound in harness animals made obedient to the yoke; and, in order that they might prove, by their strength, the substitutes for mortals in the greatest toils, I forced the steeds to be guided by the rein in chariots², the ornaments of wealth and luxury. And no one before me invented the bark of the mariner, that traverses the sea with its canvas wings. Yet I, who was the author of these inventions to man, have not, in my own misery, any device by which I can obtain relief from the sufferings which oppress me!

CHORUS.—You have been subjected to undeserved calamity: but you wander apart from wisdom; and, like an unskilful physician, having fallen into disease, you despair, and are not able to discover by what remedies your cure is to be wrought.

FROM.—Hearing the rest of my benefits, you will be still more surprised at the arts and inventions I contrived. And this not the least: if any one was assailed by disease, there was no specific against it, either in food, unguent or draught, but the sick fell away through want of medicine, until I taught them to compound soothing restoratives, by which

same author represents Dædalus as having first taught the art of working in wood; and Sophocles, in a Fragment preserved by Achilles Tatius, ascribes to Palamedes the inventions of Astrology and Numbers, which Prometheus proceeds to enumerate among the many benefits which he bestowed on men.

(1) Abreschius has translated this most villainously: “*Arithmetican omni fraude superiorum.*”

(2) “*Primus Erichonius currus et quatuor ausus
Jungere equos.*”—*Virg. Georg. III. 113.*

they might be able to repel all maladies¹. I marked out, also, various modes of divination; and first determined what dreams would prove true; and made clear to them the hidden interpretation of ominous sounds, and of meetings by the way²; and plainly pointed out the distinction in the flight of birds with crooked talons, both those which are propitious in their nature and those which are ill-omened, and what kind of life they each lead, and what are their mutual enmities and sympathies and intercourse; and the smoothness of the entrails, and what colour they must have to be pleasing to the Gods; and the various shapes that were fortunate in the gall and liver: but having consumed with fire the limbs enclosed in the fat and the long loin, I shewed mortals a path through the difficulties of this art; and I revealed to them the inferences to be drawn from the blaze of flame, which were before hidden from their knowledge. Such was, in part, the nature of my gifts: and who can assert that he discovered before me the benefits for mankind that lie concealed beneath the earth—brass, and iron, and silver, and gold³? no one, I am sure, who does not wish to talk idly and falsely³! But, in a few words, you shall learn at once the extent of my benefits: There is no art among men that is not derived from Prometheus.

CHORUS.—Do not, I pray you, aid mortals beyond what is fitting, and then manifest a want of care for your own misfortunes; for I cheer myself with the hope, that you

(1) Apollo disputes the honour of this invention with Prometheus:

“Inventum medicina meum est; opifercque per orbem
Dicor, et herbarum subiecta potentia nobis.” *Ovid. Met. I. 521.*

(2) “Obvia signa quæ fausta aut infasta in itinere occurrunt; quale Xerxi de equâ leporem pariente, et Agamemnoni de aquilis leporem vorantibus, in Agam. v. 120.”—STANLEY.

(3) Pliny (vii. 56.) has ventured, notwithstanding these hard words of Prometheus, to ascribe the discovery of the metals to others:—“Ferum Hesiodus in Cretâ eos qui vocati sunt Dactyli Idæi. Argentum invenit Erichonius Atheniensis, ut alii Æacus. Auri metalla et conflaturam Cadmus Phoenix ad Pangæum montem; ut alii, Thoas et Æaclus in Panchaïa, aut Sol Oceani filius.”

shall yet escape these bonds, and become in power not inferior to Jove.

PROM.—The fate that consummates all events has not decreed that your hopes should be thus fulfilled: but I shall only escape my chains after having been crushed by infinite sufferings and woes; for art is by far weaker than necessity.

CHORUS.—Who, then, holds the sway of necessity?

PROM.—The triple Fates, and vengeful Furies.

CHORUS.—Is Jupiter, then, weaker than those Powers?

PROM.—He cannot escape at least the decrees of Fate.

CHORUS.—For what is decreed for Jupiter, except eternal empire?

PROM.—This you may not yet know; so persist not in inquiring.

CHORUS.—Is it some important mystery that you conceal?

PROM.—Bethink yourself of some other subject; for the time is not yet come, to declare what you seek: but, on the contrary, it must be concealed with all care; for by preserving this secret I shall gain an escape from my galling chains and sorrows.

CHORUS.—May Jupiter, the ruler of the universe, never array his power in opposition to my will! nor may I fail to approach the Gods with sacred festivals of slaughtered victims beside the inexhaustible streams of my father Oceanus! nor may I sin in my words; but may this principle remain to me, and never feel decay! There is a certain charm in spending a long life in cheering hopes, and in buoying up the soul with joyous hilarity; but I shudder as I behold you racked by innumerable pains. For not fearing Jove, O Prometheus, you are led, by your self-will, to pay too much regard to mortals. Tell me, then, O friend, if that favour be not requited with ingratitude; or where there is any advantage to be derived from it? What aid can mortals afford? Have you not discovered how feeble, and how like a dream, is the imbecility which enshackles the blind race of men? Never can the counsels of mortals transcend the settled laws of Jove. I have

been convinced of this truth, O Prometheus, by seeing the misery of your lot. How different is the strain that now greets you, the present from the past, when beside the bath and your bridal couch I awoke the nuptial hymn, amid the mirth of the festival, at the time when you gained our sister Hesione for your bride, having won her by your gifts to become the wedded partner of your bed !

IO.

What land is this?—what race?—Whom shall I say that I here behold, exposed to the storm, and fettered to the rock? For what transgression does this punishment destroy you? Tell me to what part of the world I have wandered in my misery. Ah! ah! again the gadfly¹ envenoms my wretched body. O earth! avert the spectre of the earth-born Argus! I shudder as I behold the herdsman of the hundred eyes; for he follows me with his guileful aspect; and not even in death does the earth confine him; but, passing from the Shades, he closely pursues his unhappy victim, and forces me to wander, famished, along the sands of the sea; while his pipe, compacted of the reeds with wax, pours forth a murmuring sound, as it awakes its drowsy measures. Alas, alas, ye Gods!—where, O Gods, where do these lengthened wanderings conduct my steps? Of what sin, O Son of Saturn, having ever found me guilty, hast thou bowed me beneath the yoke of these sufferings? Alas! alas! why do you thus torture me to phrensy, through wretched terror of that maddening sting? Consume me with thy flame, or bury me beneath the earth, or give me as a prey to the monsters of the deep; but do not, O king, be unwilling to grant me these prayers! Sufficient hath been the toil of my many wanderings; and still I know not how I can find relief from

(1) “Asper, acerba sonans; quo tota exterrita sylvis
Diffugint armenta; furit mugitibus æther
Concussus, sylvæque et siccæ ripæ Tanagri.
Hoc quondam monstro horribiles exercuit iras
Inachiæ Juno pestem meditata juvencæ.”

Virg. Georg. III. 147.

calamity.—Hearest thou the voice of the virgin that bears the heifer's form¹?

PROM.—How should I not hear the virgin maddened by the gadfly, the daughter of Inachus, who inflames the heart of Jupiter with love, and who, through the hate of Juno, is now compelled to the toil of these lengthened wanderings?

IO.—Whence hast thou learned to pronounce the name of my father? O tell to me, an unhappy being, who thou art, thyself unhappy, that thus dost truly address me as wretched, and hast named the heaven-sent pest which consumes my life, evenoming me with its maddening stings! Ah! ah! hither have I bounding come, being goaded to speed by the pangs of famine, and forced to submit to the malignant designs of Juno. Among the victims of misfortune, are there any who, alas! suffer such sorrows as mine? But do you clearly shew to me what I am yet fated to endure, and what I shall escape. Disclose to me, if you possess the knowledge, some remedy for this disease. O speak; nor hide it from the forlorn and wandering virgin!

PROM.—I will clearly tell you all which you seek to know; not weaving a dark discourse, but in plain words; as it is fitting that we should utter our sentiments to friends. You see Prometheus, the giver of fire to mortals.

IO.—Unhappy Prometheus! thou who didst appear for

(1) There has been much discussion as to the shape in which we are to suppose that Io made her appearance on the stage. Brumoy, Schütz, and Heath, have ridiculed the idea of a cow supporting a character; and have maintained, that, with the exception of horns, the unhappy daughter of Inachus preserved her natural form. Dacier is of a contrary opinion; and we conceive that the text justifies it beyond a doubt. The miseries of which Io complains, are those which afflict the herd: and so Virgil has justly represented them, in the passage quoted above. If she had suffered no other change but in the addition of horns, why should she have spoken with such horror of the persecution of the gadfly? It is certainly difficult for us to imagine how she could have actually appeared as a cow, without exciting the ridicule, rather than the sympathy, of the spectator: but this play is altogether wild and fanciful; and being beyond common nature, is not to be judged by common rules.

the general benefit of mankind ! in punishment for what offence dost thou suffer these pains ?

PROM.—I have just ceased bewailing my sufferings.

IO.—Will you not, then, vouchsafe this boon to me ?

PROM.—Let me know what you request; for you shall learn every thing from me.

IO.—Tell me, who rivetted you to this cleft rock ?

PROM.—The counsel, indeed, was Jove's; but the work, Vulcan's.

IO.—And for what sin do you atone by this punishment ?

PROM.—I have already declared to you enough.

IO.—Still, tell me, besides, the end of my wanderings, and what period shall arrive to my unhappy doom ?

PROM.—It were better for you not to learn, than to learn what you seek.

IO.—Do not, however, conceal from me that which I am about to suffer.

PROM.—Nay, do not suppose that I grudge to bestow what you ask.

IO.—Why, then, should you delay to declare the whole ?

PROM.—I feel no reluctance, except in my fear to pain your mind.

IO.—Do not any longer be solicitous on my account, since your compliance would be agreeable to me.

PROM.—If such is your wish, it becomes me to speak. Then hear—

CHORUS.—Not yet, I pray; but grant to me, also, a share in the gratification. Let us first inquire of her disease, from this virgin; herself relating her deadly calamities: and then let the rest of her sufferings be disclosed by you.

PROM.—It is your duty, IO, to bestow on them this favour, both for other reasons, and especially because they are sisters of your father¹. It is, besides, no vain waste of

(1) Inachus, the father of IO, was descended, like all the other rivers, from Oceanus and Tethys.

time to mourn and bewail misfortunes with those from whom, when they hear the tale, one is likely to win their tears.

10.—I know not how I can refuse your request; and you shall therefore hear from me, in plain words, all that you seek to learn. And yet I am ashamed to tell of the storm of heaven's wrath, and of the sad change of my form, from whence they visited their unhappy victim: for visions of the night, ever visiting the chambers of my virgin youth, beguiled my heart with these seductive words: “O maid, highly-favoured by heaven! why dost thou so long a maid remain, when it is granted to thy hopes to gain the proudest of marriages? for Jove hath been inflamed, from thy beauty, by the shaft of desire, and longs to enjoy with thee the sweets of love. Do not then, O virgin, despise the embrace of Jove, but seek, amid the fertile meads of Lerna, the pastures and folds of thy father, that the eye of Jove may rest from its desire.” By such dreams was I cruelly haunted every night, until I took courage to tell my father of the visions that disturbed my repose; and he sent to Pytho and to Dodona¹ many a seer to consult the Gods, that he might learn by what deeds or words he might be able to fulfil the pleasure of the Gods; but his messengers returned to tell of oracles of dubious interpretation, obscure and mysteriously expressed: until, at length, there came a clear response to Inachus, enjoining and expressing, without ambiguity, that he should drive me away from my home and my country, to wander, abandoned to my fate, to the remotest regions of the earth; and if he refused to comply, it was denounced that the fiery bolt of Jove should descend, and annihilate all his race. Persuaded by such oracles of Apollo, he unwilling banished and excluded me unwilling from his house: but the command of Jove compelled him to do this deed against his will.

(1) The Scholiast has detected an anachronism in this mention of the Oracles; as even Dodona, the most ancient in Greece, was not consecrated till after the times of Deucalion.

My form and my mind immediately underwent a change; the heifer's horns, as ye see, were given to me; and, envenomed by the keen bite of the gadfly, I rushed with mad-dened speed to the fair waters of Cenchrea's stream, and to the fount of Lerna: but Argus, the earthborn shepherd, intemperate in his anger, followed my course, watching all my steps with his hundred eyes. An unexpected and sudden fate deprived him of life; but I, stung by the gadfly, am still forced, by that scourge of heaven, to roam from land to land. You hear my past fortunes; and if you can tell aught of my future sufferings, declare it, nor, through pity, soothe me with false words; for I account a fictitious tale an evil and a disgrace.

CHORUS.—Ah! ah! alas! forbear! Never, never could I have dreamed that such a marvellous tale should reach my ears; nor that calamities, wrongs, and horrors, so dire to be seen and endured in their sharpest of pangs, should freeze my soul. Alas! alas! thou power of Fate! I shudder as I behold the condition of Io.

PROM.—You groan too soon, and yield yourself too easily to fear. Stay, till you have also heard the rest.

CHORUS.—Speak and inform me: it is a relief to the afflicted to know clearly, before its time, the coming evil¹.

PROM.—Your former request, at least, you obtained from me without difficulty: for you first desired to learn from this maid the tale of her own sufferings. Hear now those which are yet in store for her, and what calamities it is fated that she shall endure from the wrath of Juno: and do you, O daughter of Inachus, lay up my words in your mind, that you may clearly discover where your wanderings are to end. First, when you leave this mountain, having turned² towards the rising of the sun, pursue your way over an uncultivated region; and you shall come to the pastoral

¹ (1) This sentiment is both untrue to nature, and inconsistent with the more philosophical view which the poet had already taken of the same subject in a previous part of the drama. *Vid.* 255—260.

² (2) “ *Namque ad extremas partes Septentrionis pervenisse supponitur.*”—STANLEY.

Scythians, who, armed with the far-darting bow, dwell in wattled abodes, that are constructed on high, above the wheels of their cars. Do not approach these tribes ; but, directing your steps to the rocky shore of the tempestuous sea, pass forth from the country. On the left dwell the Chalybians, skilled in working iron, a people whom you ought to avoid ; for they are rugged in their dispositions, and may not be approached by strangers with safety¹. But you shall come to the river *Hybristes*², betokening its violence by its name ; which you shall not attempt to pass, for its streams allow no easy ford, until you come to Caucasus itself, the monarch of mountains, where from the highest steeps this river pours forth its foaming tide. After you have crossed the summits of this heaven-kissing hill, you must proceed in a southward course ; by which you shall come to the unwedded tribes of Amazons, who, at some future period, shall found Themiscyra, beside Thermodon³, where the rugged Salmydessian Promontory, the stepmother of ships, threatens, amid the sea, destruction to mariners. These virgins shall, with willing zeal, conduct you on your way ; and you shall come to the Cimmeric Isthmus, beside the narrow entrance of the lake, which you must leave without fear, and cross the Straits of the Mæotis. The fame of this passage shall ever be celebrated among mortals ; and it shall be called Bosphorus⁴, in honour of your name. Thus, having left the plains of Europe, you shall come to the continent of Asia. Does not, then, the tyrant of the Gods appear to

(1) " Non ita sit metuenda tibi, sævissima quanquam, gens Chalybum."—*Valer. Flaco. Argonaut.* iv. 610.

(2) Some commentators have considered *Hybristes* as an epithet applied to the Araxes, or some other of the great rivers which flow through the same region. Schütz, after successfully combating this opinion, concludes by remarking : " Nomen huic flumini *Hybristes* fuerit necesse est, quanquam hodiè, quemnam fluvium eo nomine designaverit poëta, conjectura vix exputari potest, nedum certò definiri."

(3) " Quales Threicæ cùm ad flumina Thermodontis

Pulsant, et pictis bellantur Amazones armis." *Virg. Aen.* XI. 659.

(4) Literally, *Oxford*.

you' to be equally violent in all things?—for he, a God, having courted the embraces of this mortal, has afterwards compelled her to these wanderings. And you, O damsel, have met with a cruel suitor for your love; for let the tale of your woes which you have now heard be regarded by you as scarcely their prelude.

10.—Woe is me! Alas! alas!

PROM.—You again exclaim, and renew your groans: what will you do when you hear the evils that yet remain for you?

CHORUS.—Can it be that you have other calamities to tell to this maid?

PROM.—Yes; a stormy sea of darkest troubles¹.

10.—What advantage, then, is it for me to live? and why do I not quickly fling myself from this rugged rock, so that, falling headlong to the plain, I may obtain a release from all my sorrows? for it is better once to die, than to endure misfortunes through all my days.

PROM.—You would certainly bear but ill my sufferings, to whom it is not granted by the Fates to die²; for this would set me free from misery: but now there is not any end of these calamities appointed to me, before that Jove shall be forced to relinquish his throne.

10.—Shall it ever be, that Jove shall lose his dominion by force?

PROM.—You would be rejoiced, I doubt not, to see this event.

10.—How should I not rejoice, since I endure these hardships from Jove?

PROM.—You may be assured, then, that this doom will befall him.

(1) Addressing the Chorus.

(2) "Æschylus item Britannus dixit, *A sea of troubles.* *Hamlet*, Act.

III. 1."—BUTLER.

(3) _____ " Sic Caucaseà sub rupe Prometheus,

Testatur Saturnigenam, nec nomine cessat

Incusare Jovem, data quòd sit vita perennis."

Auson. Idyl. xv. 21.

Io.—By whom shall he be despoiled of his regal sceptre?

Prom.—By himself, through his own infatuated counsels.

Io.—In what manner? Explain, if it be no harm.

Prom.—He shall contract such a marriage as shall cause him after-grief.

Io.—With divinity, or with mortal¹? Tell, if it may be told.

Prom.—Why do you inquire the nature of the marriage? for it is not permitted me to disclose it.

Io.—Is it by his wife that he shall be removed from his throne?

Prom.—Yes, by a wife who shall give birth to a son more potent than his sire.

Io.—Has he no means of escaping from this fate?

Prom.—None, in truth, until at least I am released from these bonds.

Io.—But who is he that shall release you, against the will of Jove?

Prom.—It is fated that it shall be one of your own descendants.

Io.—How say you? Shall a son of mine deliver you from your evils?

Prom.—Yes, he who is born the third after ten other generations².

Io.—This oracle is, as yet, dark of interpretation.

Prom.—Neither examine it farther, nor seek to learn the whole tale of your own sufferings.

Io.—Do not, after offering me a favour, then deny it to my wishes.

Prom.—I will concede to you one of two narrations.

Io.—Of what description? First let me know them, and allow me a choice.

Prom.—I allow it: for choose whether I shall clearly

(1) Possibly Io was still looking out for the reversion of her old admirer.

(2) Epaphus, Libya, Belus, Danaus, Hypermnestra, Abas, Praetus, Acrisius, Danaë, Perseus, Electryon, Alcmene; and lastly Hercules, the deliverer to whom Prometheus alludes.

declare your remaining toils, or tell you of him who is to set me free.

CHORUS.—Of these favours, do not be unwilling to grant the one to her, and the other to me; nor slight my request. To her, make known her future wanderings; but to me, the person who shall set you free; for this I am anxious to hear.

PROM.—Since you desire it, I will not refuse to declare all that you seek to know.—To you, Io, I will first describe the mazy course of your wandering; and do you engrave my words on the retentive tablets of your memory. When you shall have advanced from the strait that separates the two continents, towards the path of the sun in the burning east * * * * * * * you shall cross the resounding sea, until you arrive at the Gorgonian plains of Cisthene, where dwell the daughters of Phorcys, three ancient swan-like maids¹, possessing only one eye and one tooth, whom neither the sun beholds with his beams, nor ever the moon in her nightly course. Near them dwell the three winged sisters, the abhorred Gorgons² with their hair of snakes, whom no mortal shall look on and live. I therefore warn you, by this caution, of your danger. But now listen to the account of other beings who are horrible to view; for you have also to avoid the Gryphons³, the

(1) These singular beings, by name Ento, Pemphredo, and Dino, were born with all the marks of old age. Stanley observes: "Hinc forsan κυκλομορφοι dictæ, quia canæ."

(2) Euryale, Stheno, and Medusa.

(3) "In Asiaticâ Scythiâ terre sunt locupletes, inhabitabiles tamen: nam cum auro et gemmis affluent, Grypes tenent universa, alites ferocissimæ et ultra omnem rabiem sevientes, quarum immanitate obsistente ad venas divites accessus difficilis ac rarus est; quippe visos discerpunt, veluti geniti ad plectendum avaritiae temeritatem."—*Solin.* c. 15.

" As when a gryphon through the wilderness
Pursues the Arimaspians, who by stealth
Had from his wakeful custody purloin'd
The guarded gold: so eagerly the fiend,
O'er bog, or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way."

Milton. P. L. II. 943.

dumb and ravenous hounds of Jove, and the equestrian bands of the one-eyed Arimaspians¹, who dwell around the streams of Plutus and the fount that flows with gold. These approach not: but you shall come, in a far-distant land, to a swarthy race, who dwell near the sources of the dawn, beside the Æthiopian river: along this river's banks pursue your course, until you come to the cataract, where, from the Bybline mountains, the Nile pours his sacred and salubrious² tide: his stream will conduct you to the triangular Nilotic land; where, Io, it is fated for you and your children to found a distant colony. If any of these words are dark and unintelligible to you, renew your inquiries, and learn the whole distinctly; for I have more leisure than I wish.

CHORUS.—If you have any of her sad and many wanderings remaining or omitted to tell her, speak; but if you have told her of all, now grant to us the favour which we asked, and which haply you remember.

PROM.—She has already been informed of the completion of all her wanderings: and that she may know that she has not heard my predictions without authority, I will declare the labours she endured before she came hither, and thus offer a corroboration of my words. The main burden of the narrative I will indeed omit, and advance to the very close of your wanderings; for when you came to the plains of Molossus, and traversed the lofty steeps of Dodona, where are the oracle and shrine of Thesprotian Jove, and that incredible prodigy the vocal oaks, you were hailed by them clearly, and without dubious meaning, as the illustrious spouse of Jove, who was to be; a title, of which the remembrance even now delights your soul. Being driven thence by the gadfly, along the paths by the sea, you rushed to the mighty gulf of Rhea; from which you now pursue the stormy course of your return.

(1) See Herodot. IV. 27.

(2) "Huc pertinet Pescennii dictum ad milites, *Nilum habetis, et vi-*
num queritis? Plura de dulcedine aquæ Niloticæ Spartanus in Pescennio
Nigro."—STANLEY.

But in future time, be well assured, that bay of the ocean shall be called the Ionian ; as a memorial, to all mortals, of the way through which you passed. Let these be the proofs to you of my intelligence, that its vision penetrates farther than that which is revealed to the eye. But I will tell the rest to you and her as common information, returning to the same track of my former narrative.—In the remotest regions of the world stands the city Canopus, beside the very mouth and alluvial formations of the Nile, where Jupiter shall again restore you to your senses, by only touching and stroking you with his soothing hand. And, with name derived from the mode in which he was engendered by Jupiter, you shall bring forth the dark Epaphus, who shall enjoy the fruits of all the shores that are washed by the broad waters of the Nile. But the fifty virgins¹, who form the fifth generation from him, shall unwillingly return to Argos, seeking to escape the kindred marriage of their cousins²; who, hurrying in the flutter of passion, like hawks following closely on the doves³, shall come to seek a marriage eluding their pursuit, and court embraces of which the Gods shall deny to them the enjoyment. But the Pelasgic land shall receive the bodies of the lovers, overpowered by a deed of female daring that watched for the opportunity of the midnight slaughter: for each bride shall deprive her husband of life, and dye in his blood the double edge of the whetted sword. O that Venus would visit with such rites my enemies⁴! But desire shall soften one⁵ of the virgins, so as not to slay the partner of her bed ; but she shall feel her

(1) The daughters of Danaus.

(2) The sons of Ægyptus.

(3) “ Sic ego currebam, sic me ferus ille premebat ;

Ut fugere accipitrem pennâ trepidante columbæ,

Ut solet accipiter pavidas urgere columbas.”

Ovid. Met. V. 604.

(4) “ Passim habes apud antiquos ejusmodi plurima, quæ nulla literarum cultura, nulla præcepta philosophiæ, donec lux Christianæ religiæ effulisset, humanissimas gentes dedocere potuerunt.”—BUTLER.

(5) Hypermnestra, who spared her husband Lynceus.

purpose blunted ; and of two choices, she shall prefer to be called faint of heart, rather than bloody of hand. She shall give birth, in Argos, to a line of kings¹. There were need of many words to unfold clearly their history ; but from this seed, however, shall spring a dauntless warrior, renowned for the bow, who shall release me from these toils. Such was the prediction which my ancient mother, Titanian Themis, delivered to me : but how and where, requires a long tale to describe ; and you by learning it would gain nothing.

10.—Alas ! alas ! The agony of pain, and madness of the phrensyed mind, again inflame me ; and the sting of the gadfly envenoms me with its fiery poison. My heart, in its terror, beats violently against my bosom, and my eyes roll wildly around ; and I am driven out of my course by the furious gust of phrensy, without the power of controlling my tongue ; for its turbid words dash at random against the waves of hateful calamity².

CHORUS.—Wise in truth, wise in truth was he who first supported this maxim in opinion, and promulgated it in words ;—that to wed in an equal alliance is by far the best³ ; and that it is vain for the lowly of degree to be enamoured of those who revel in the luxury of wealth, or of those who pride themselves in the grandeur of their birth. Never, never, O ye Fates, may ye behold me as the partner of the bed of Jove ! nor may I be laid by the side of any bridegroom of the race of heaven ! for I tremble as I behold the virgin Io, in consequence of her not having loved a

(1) Her immediate descendant was Ábas, who, after the expulsion of Danaus, succeeded to the throne.

(2) “ *Id ex hisce non appareat, et ridiculus est poëta, ea proferens quæ contrarium probant apertè. Debuisset linguae et mentis confusionem verbis exprimere.*” PAUW. A more absurd criticism cannot well be imagined. The words of Io express most admirably the disordered state of her mind, becoming gradually more wild and incoherent, till at length they end in absolute raving. Butler only condemns the arrogance of his brother commentator : “ *Hypercriticum hic certè superat Pauwius, et solitum sibi supercilium plùsquam Zoili rabie contrahit.*”

(3) “ *Si qua voles aptè nubere, nube pari.*” *Ovid. Ep. Her. IX. 32.*

mortal, cruelly tortured by the toilsome wanderings inflicted by Juno. But I feel not fear, since my equal marriage gives me no cause of alarm ; only may not the love of mightier Gods regard me with the glance that will not be denied ! This war at least baffles all resistance, and forces its way through every difficulty ; nor do I know what would become of me, for I see not how I could avoid the purpose of Jove.

PROM.—Nevertheless Jove, although his thoughts be stubborn, shall yet be humbled ; for he prepares to contract such a marriage as will utterly banish him from his kingdom and throne ; and then shall be fully consummated the curse of his father Saturn, which he imprecated when he was driven from his ancient throne. None of the Gods, except me, can clearly disclose to him the method of escaping from these calamities ; but I know both the method and the means. Let him sit, then, as if secure, putting his trust in the thunders of the sky, and brandishing in his hand his fire-breathing bolt ; for these weapons shall not avail, to save him from falling degraded into intolerable ruin ; so dread is the adversary¹ that he now prepares against himself, the prodigy of resistless might, who shall discover a flame that obscures his lightning, and the strength of a sound that deafens his thunders, and who by force shall shiver the spear of Neptune, the trident of the sea, the pest that shakes the earth. Then shall Jove, when he comes suddenly on this calamity, be taught how great is the difference between the tyrant and the slave.

CHORUS.—You indeed imprecate against Jove what you wish to happen.

PROM.—I speak of what shall happen, as well as what I wish.

CHORUS.—Are we to expect that some one shall obtain power over Jupiter?

(1) “Non hic Hercules denotatur, ut putabat Brumoeus, nunquam enim ille Jovem regno exturbavit, sed filius nunquam revera natus, qui vero nasci debebat, si nuptias cum Thetide consummasset Jupiter.”—HEATH.

PROM.—Yes; and that he shall have to bow to sufferings more intolerable than mine.

CHORUS.—How do you not fear giving vent to such words?

PROM.—What should I fear, to whom it is not fated to die?

CHORUS.—But he may inflict on you a suffering still more grievous than the present.

PROM.—Let him inflict it then; for the worst is to be expected by me.

CHORUS.—They who venerate Adrastea¹ are wise.

PROM.—Venerate, worship, flatter him whoever happens to be in power; but I care for Jove less than nothing. Let him act, let him rule for this brief time, as he pleases; for his empire of heaven soon draws to a close. But I refrain from saying more; for I see at hand the Messenger of Jove, the servant of the new tyrant. Without doubt he has come to tell some new resolve.

MERCURY.

My message is to you, the inventor of fraud—to you, so violent in your rage, who sinned against the Gods in communicating their honours to mortals, and who stole from heaven the fire. The Father commands you to declare what are the nuptials you boast of, by which he shall be expelled from the sovereignty; and to tell your meaning in no enigmatical way, but clearly to explain every circumstance. And do not, Prometheus, impose on me the necessity of returning on this mission; for you see that Jove is incensed by such stubbornness.

PROM.—Your speech is arrogant, and full of pride, considering that it comes from a lackey of the Gods. New in office, ye enjoy your upstart power, and think that ye dwell in towers secured against disaster. Have I not seen two Rulers² driven by force from these very towers? and, as a third, I shall behold him who now bears the sway most

(1) Or, Nemesis.—For the derivation of the name, and all the learning respecting this Goddess, see the elaborate note of Stanley.

(2) Coelus and Saturn.

quickly and most disgracefully resign it. Do I seem to you in aught to fear or dread the new Gods? I am far and altogether removed from such a thought.—But do you hasten back, by the road by which you came; for you shall learn nothing of what you ask me.

MERC.—It was by a similar obstinacy that you formerly brought yourself into these misfortunes.

PROM.—Be assured that I would not exchange the hardships of my lot for your slavery¹: for I deem it better to be in bondage to this rock, than to have been born the faithful messenger of father Jove². It is proper thus to taunt with insult the insolent.

MERC.—You seem to delight in your present circumstances.

PROM.—Delight! In such delightful state may I behold my enemies³! and I count you for one in the number.

MERC.—For do you also lay to my charge some share in your misfortunes?

PROM.—In good truth, I hate all the Gods, as many as, having partaken of my benefits, persecute me with injustice.

MERC.—I perceive, from what I hear, that you are distempered with no slight phrensy.

PROM.—May I feel distemper! if such it be, to hate my enemies.

(1) “Græca libertas mente (Prometheo) odium servitutis altissimum insidere vult. In Æschylō semper eum videbis, qui, Marathone pugnāsse, ita sibi p̄e reliquis operibus gloriæ duxit, ut in sepulchri inscriptione hujus unius diei mentionem fieri voluisse, Pausanias in Atticis memorise prodit.”—MÜLLER.

(2) “Here we may reign secure: and in my choice,
To reign is worth ambition, though in hell:
Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven.”

Milton. P.L. I. 260.

“Thou art a King, a sovereign over men;
I am a Druid, servant of the Gods—
Such service is above sovereignty.” *Mason's Caractacus.*

(3) “Utinam male qui mihi volunt, sic rideant.”

Plautus, Asin. v. 1.

MERC.—You would be intolerable if you were in prosperity.

PROM.—Alas !

MERC.—Jupiter does not know this word.

PROM.—But time, as it advances, teaches all things.

MERC.—And yet you, for instance, have not yet learned to be wise.

PROM.—If I had, I should not have addressed you, who are a slave.

MERC.—You seem as if you would tell nought of what the Father seeks to know.

PROM.—And certainly, as being indebted to him, I ought to return a favour.

MERC.—You have taunted me, forsooth, as if I were a boy.

PROM.—For are you not a boy, and even more foolish than a boy, if you think that you shall learn any thing from me ? There is no torture nor device by which Jove shall prevail upon me to declare these secrets, before the bonds that afflict me shall have been loosed. Let, therefore, his blazing lightnings be hurled ; and let him confound and disturb the universe with white-winged snow, and with thunders that shake the earth ; for none of these terrors shall bend my purpose, so as to make me declare by whom it is decreed that he shall be expelled from his throne¹.

(1) " It is not necessary to send the ladies to Pindar for their information in this celestial anecdote ; as our courtly Lansdowne, in his Masque of Peleus and Thetis, is ready to discover the secret. Jupiter beheld the charms of Thetis, daughter of Océanus, with the eye of a lover, and intended to advance her, as his consort, to the imperial throne of heaven. Now it was in the Fates, that this lady should have a son, who was to be greater than his father. Prometheus alone, by his divine foresight, could open the danger to Jupiter ; but this he firmly refused to do, till he should be released from the rock. After that Hercules, by the permission of Jupiter, had killed the tormenting eagle, and unbound his chains, he disclosed the decree of the Fates ; Thetis was given in marriage to Peleus ; and the prophecy was accomplished in the famous Achilles."—POTTER.

MERC.—See, now, if such counsels appear to be of advantage to you.

PROM.—They have long since been considered, and maturely determined.

MERC.—Submit, O foolish being! submit at length to judge rightly with regard to your present misfortunes.

PROM.—You trouble me with your persuasions, as vainly as the wave assails the rock. Never let it enter your imagination, that I, fearing the intentions of Jove, shall become of dastard spirit, and with hands uplifted, like a woman, beseech the object of my bitter hate to set me free from these bonds: I am far from such a thought.

MERC.—I seem, after all that I have said, to have spoken in vain; for you are in no degree moved or softened, as to your heart, by entreaty; but champing the bit like an unmanageable colt, you strain and contend against the rein. And yet it is on a weak argument that you display this violence; for obstinacy, in the case of him who deliberates unwisely, is by itself of less avail than nothing. But consider, if you be not persuaded by my words, what a storm and violent surge of evils shall inevitably assail you; for first, indeed, the Father of the Gods shall rend this rugged cliff with the thunder and the flame of the lightning, and shall bury your body, and the rock shall bear you away in its embrace. After a long lapse of time, you shall again return to the light; but the winged hound of Jove, the blood-thirsty eagle, shall ravenously mangle all your lacerated body, coming an unbidden guest to prolong the banquet through the whole day, and shall gorge his hunger by gnawing your black liver. Of this agony you need not expect a close, till some one of the Gods shall appear as a successor to your toils, and be willing to descend to the gloomy Hades and to the dark abysses of Tartarus¹. Therefore deliberate; since these threats are

(1) “Puto poëtam hic intelligere liberationem cœlestem generis humani: de quâ haud dubiè cognôrat quedam ex prophetiis et sapientiâ Hebræorum, sicut tum etiam in vaticiniis Sibyllinis multa de hoc

mysterio

not feigned, but spoken in earnest; for the mouth of Jove knows not to utter what is false, but will bring to completion its every word. But do you look around you, and consider; nor ever account obstinacy better than prudent counsel.

CHORUS.—To us, indeed, Mercury appears to speak with reason; for he advises you to lay aside your obstinacy, and to search after wise counsel. Be thus persuaded; for it is disgraceful to the wise to err.

PROM.—He has urged this message on me who foreknew it; but it is nothing dishonourable for an enemy to suffer evils from his enemies. Let, therefore, the wreaths of the forked lightning be hurled against me; and let the air be disturbed by the thunder, and by the convulsion of wild winds; and let the fury of their blast shake by the very roots the earth from its foundations, and in the tempest of tumultuous waves confound the billows of the sea, and the paths of the stars through heaven; and headlong to the gloomy Tartarus let him cast my body in the resistless eddies of necessity! for it is still beyond his power to deprive me of life!

MERC.—Such counsels and words you may hear from the insane; for in what respect does he fall short of delirium, if even in misfortune he does not moderate his rage? But

mysterio celebrabantur. **GARBIT.**—“*Hoc vult Mercurius, nullus planè tibi erit finis serumnarum. Conditionem enim liberationis addit, que nullo pacto erat expectanda. Similis figura dictio*nis *in illo Terentiano, Andr. I. 2.*

*Verberibus cæsum te in pistrinum, Dave, dedam usque ad necem;
Hac lege atque omine, ut, si te indè exemerim, ego pro te molam.”*

SCHÜTZ.

Butler supposes that the allusion is to Hercules; which is still more unsatisfactory than the former explanations; for the secret of his deliverance, which Prometheus so carefully guarded, was of course unknown to Mercury. The Scholiast explains the passage, by saying, that whoever attempted to relieve Prometheus, should himself be sent to the shades of Orcus, and the dark abyss of Tartarus. It is quite clear, from the text, that this is not its natural interpretation; but it is equally difficult to suggest any other that will remove the obscurity.

do you at least, who sympathize in his sufferings, depart hence with speed to some other place, lest the hoarse belowing of the thunder distract your minds.

CHORUS.—Speak, and advise something else, to which you may be able to persuade me, for you have here interweaved a counsel which is by no means to be endured. How can you exhort me to practise what is base? Along with this sufferer, I am willing to meet his fate: for I have learned to hate those who are untrue to their friends, and there is no pest which I abhor more than faithlessness.

MERC.—But do you bear in mind my warnings; and do not, when overtaken by calamity, accuse fortune, nor ever say that Jove has precipitated you into unforeseen disaster: no truly, but you have precipitated yourselves; for knowing your fate, and not on a sudden nor in secret, you are about to be entangled, through your folly, in the inextricable trials of calamity.

PROM.—And truly, in deed, and no longer in word, the earth hath been shaken; and the deep-resounding roar of the thunder bellows past us, and the volleyed flames of lightning break from the clouds, and the whirlwinds raise the eddies of dust, and the blasts of all the winds are in wild commotion, arraying against each other their conflicting storms, and the sky hath been confounded with the sea. Such a power of Jove's awakening fear is manifestly directed against me. O dread divinity of my mother Earth! O firmament of heaven, that diffusest thy common light to all! ye behold the wrongs I suffer!

THE
SEVEN CHIEFS AGAINST THEBES.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

ETEOCLES.

MESSENGER.

CHORUS OF VIRGINS.

ISMENE.

ANTIGONE.

HERALD.

THE
SEVEN CHIEFS AGAINST THEBES.

ETEOCLES.

Ye citizens of Cadmus, it becomes him to deliver seasonable counsels, whoever is the guardian of affairs in the vessel of the state, directing aright its helm without lulling his eyelids to repose. For if our fortunes prosper, all is ascribed to the God ; but if, on the other hand—which may Heaven forbid !—calamity should befall us, the name of Eteocles would alone be loudly resounded through the city by the people, in tumultuous reproaches and lamentations : of which, may Jupiter, in accordance with his name, prove the averter from the city of the Cadmæans ! But it behoves you now, both him who hath not yet attained the flower of youth, and him who through age hath passed his prime, buoying up the full vigour of the body—and each in the manner that befits the season of his life—to assist his country, and the altars of his country's Gods, so that their honours may never be defaced, and his children, and the land that gave him birth and reared him with fondest affection. For your country, enduring all the labour of your nurture, hath brought you up, since you first planted your infant steps on her friendly soil, to dwell within her borders in valour and faith, that ye might be ready to her aid in emergency like this. And now, indeed, up to this period, our fortunes go well ; for to us already, so long invested within these walls, the war for the most part succeeds favourably, by the blessing of the Gods. But now, as the

prophet declares, the feeder of birds¹, passing in array before his ears and mind² their auguries, without the aid of fire, by the skill of his unerring art—he that is gifted with knowledge of such oracles declares, that a great attack of the Grecians has been proclaimed for this night, and that they are planning stratagems against the city. But hasten all to the battlements and gates of the towers; rush in your panoplies; man the breast-work; and take your station on the stories of the turrets; and, firmly abiding at the outlets of the gates, be of good courage, nor dread too much the crowd of invaders: the God will grant the event to be prosperous. But I have also sent scouts and spies to watch their army, who, I trust, will not linger on their way; and having heard their report, I shall not be surprised by any stratagem.

MESSENGER.

Most gallant Eteocles, king of the Cadmæans, I come from the army, bringing clear intelligence of their proceedings; and I myself am an eye-witness of what I relate: for seven chiefs, impetuous leaders of the host, having slain a bull above a shield of sable rim, and dipping their hands in the blood of the victim, swore by Mars and Bellona and blood-thirsting Terror, that either, working the downfall of our walls, they would sack by force the city of the Cadmæans, or, dying, would mingle their blood with the dust of this land³. And they wreathed with their hands,

(1) “In verbis οἰωνῶν βούτηρος explicandis infelix est Schütz., qui propterea sic vocari Tiresiam putat, quia aves cicures aluerit, ex quibus auspicia caperet, nec felicior Schwenk., qui ab avibus carne sacrificiorum alendis hoc nomen eum traxisse opinatur. Recte vidit Wunderl. p. 193. eum avium dominum vocari, quatenus ex iis vaticinandi facultatem habebat.”—WELLAUER.

(2) Tiresias was punished by Minerva with blindness, because he had been so presumptuous as to gaze upon her naked charms. His mother Chariclo interceded in his behalf; but the Goddess was unable to restore his sight; and therefore gave him, as a compensation, the faculty of understanding the voices of all birds. Divination by fire, and other ocular signs, were, of course, beyond the reach of his art.

(3) This description has been quoted by Longinus, with warm praises of its

around the chariot of Adrastus¹, memorials of themselves to their parents at home, shedding the tear: but no sign of pity appeared in their looks; for their minds, enkindled by courage, breathed only of iron purpose, like lions from whose eyes glares the spirit of battle. And the information of these circumstances is not protracted by delay; for I left them casting lots, how each, as it fell to his fortune, should lead onward his squadron to the gates. Therefore quickly station at the outlets of the gates the chosen and bravest warriors of our city; for already the army of the Argives is advancing in full armour, and hastening amid clouds of dust, while the white foam from the snortings of their steeds sprinkles, with its gouts, the plain. But do you, like the prudent pilot of a ship, provide for the security of the city, before the blasts of Mars burst on it; for the wave of the army now roars along the plain²: and embrace, in what you do, the quickest opportunity: and I, for the future, will employ my eye in faithful watch by day³, so that, learning from my clear intelligence the motions of the army without the walls, you shall be secure from danger.

ETEOCLES.—O Jove! and Earth! and ye Gods who possess our city! and thou curse of our race, the potent fiend invoked by my father! do not, I pray, destroy utterly from its foundations, in captive ruin, a city that utters the language of Greece, nor the hearths of our homes! O never, beneath a yoke of slavery, bind a land of freedom and the city of Cadmus; but prove our defence! For I trust that I

its sublimity. There is an attempt in the *Lysistrata* to turn it into ridicule; which only displays the ill-nature without the usual wit of the author.

(1) It had been predicted by Amphiaraus, that, of the seven chiefs, Adrastus alone should survive the war. His chariot is therefore selected to bear home the last gifts of his fated companions.

(2) “*Nemo sanè belli impetus et pericula descripsit fortiùs et meliùs quam hic bellator noster fortissimus, Æschylus; imaginibus verò utitur, quæ ut plurimum admirationis et terroris incutiunt, quippe à ventorum marisque turbati impetu translati.*”—BURTON.

(3) “*Quia antea noctu exploravit, v. 29.*”—STANLEY.

speak for our common interest; since a city in prosperity pays honour to the Gods¹.

CHORUS.

I mourn for these dangers, so fearful and mighty. The army, leaving its camp, is poured against us; and hitherward flow their vast troops of cavalry, in front of the array. The dust that appears in the air convinces me; a silent messenger, but true and certain in its tidings. The sound of clanging hoofs on the plain approaches to startle our repose, even now more nearly is wafted through the air, and deepens in its din, like some resistless torrent that tears its mountain channel. Oh! oh! oh! O Gods and Goddesses, avert the coming evil! for the bands, that wave their white shields beyond the walls, now rush on with shouts in goodly array, directing their course to our towers. Who then, of Gods or Goddesses, will deliver us? who then stand to our defence? Before which statues of the Gods shall I fall? O ye blessed Powers, seated on your glorious thrones, now is the moment to cling as suppliants to your images! Why then, in this height of our misery, do we delay? Hear, or hear ye not, the din of shields? When, if not now, shall we betake ourselves to the suppliant offering of robes² and chaplets? I see the sound!—that clash was of no single spear. What dost thou design, O Mars, ancient God of our country? wilt thou betray this, thine own land? O God of the golden-helm, look down from heaven, look down on this city, which thou erst didst fix in thy fond affection! O Gods of the country, whose temples are within these walls, behold, O all behold this band of virgins imploring you to escape captivity! for the tide of warriors with waving crests chafes around the city, impelled before the blasts of Mars.

(1) Ἐν δὲ ἀκολουθεῖ βέλτιστον ήθος τῆς εὐτυχίας, οἵτι φιλόθεοι εἰσι, καὶ ἔχοντες πρὸς τὸ θεῖόν πως πιστεύοντες διὰ τὰ γιγνομένα ἀγαθὰ ἀπὸ τῆς τύχης.—Arist. Rhet. II. 19.

(2) “Interea ad templum non aequæ Palladis ibant
Crinibus Iliades passis, peplumque ferebant
Suppliciter tristes.”—

Virg. Æn. I. 479.

But, O Father Jove, thou perfect God, with all thy power avert our subjection to the foe! for the Argives are investing the city of Cadmus, and fear of their martial arms pervades me; and the bits that are bound through the jaws of their horses sound dismally of slaughter; and seven chiefs, the noblest of the host, stand at the seventh gate¹, in spear-proof armour, each having obtained his station by lot. But do thou, O heavenly Power, whose joy is in the battle—Minerva, daughter of Jove, arise to defend our city! And O Neptune, inventor of the steed, who rulest the ocean with thy trident, that smites its monsters, do thou grant us a release from our terrors! And do thou, O Mars, alas! alas! protect the city that bears the name of Cadmus, and manifestly prove thy regard for it! And do thou, O Venus, who first gavest birth to our race, avert these calamities! for from thy blood we are sprung². Giving voice to prayers that implore thy heavenly aid, we now approach thee. And do thou, O Lycaeum Apollo, justify thy name³ on the host of the enemy, moved by the cry of our groans! And do thou, O virgin daughter of Latona, beloved Diana, propitiously assume thy bow! Oh! oh! oh! oh! I hear the din of chariots around the city. O awful Juno! the boxes of the loaded axles resound; the air rages with the whizzing spears. What will our city suffer? what will become of it? and to what issue will the God conduct its fate? Even now, O dear Apollo! the shower of stones, hurled by the light-armed of the enemy, assails our battlements⁴. At the

(1) Thomas Magister is followed by Stanley and Schütz in translating *ξβδηας, septem*, instead of *septimus*; which is its usual and literal meaning. The point seems clearly to be settled against them, in the excellent note of Valckenaer, quoted by Blomfield, p. 15.

(2) Cadmus, the founder of Thebes, married Harmonia, the daughter of Mars and Venus: the Chorus, therefore, avail themselves of the plea of consanguinity, to invoke the aid of both their divine progenitors.

(3) By proving a *wolf* to the enemy;—a pun on the epithet “*Lycaeum*,” which cannot of course be translated.

(4) “Quanquam Pauvius more suo acriter urget, hæc de lapidibus è muris in hostilem exercitum jactis intelligenda esse; verum tamen est,

gates is heard the clash of the brazen shields ; and there is the Sacred Band, commissioned by Jove, that brings war to its close. But do thou, O blessed Queen, amid the battle in defence of our city, rescue the seat of the seven gates ! O ye Divinities present to save, ye perfect Gods and Goddesses who defend the towers of this land, do not, in the strife of the spear, betray the city to an army whose language is not ours¹ ! Listen to these virgins ! listen, in justice, to the prayers they offer with uplifted hands ! O friendly Powers, do ye, walking around our walls as their guardians, prove how well ye love this city ; and shew your regard for the religious observances of the people ; and, regarding them, protect them with your favour ; and forget not, I pray, the willing sacrifice offered in the public rites of the city !

ETEOCLES.—I ask of you, ye intolerable creatures ! if it be best and most likely to save the city or inspire confidence in our beleaguered troops, thus falling down before the images of the Gods who guard our city, to shriek and clamour, ye objects of hatred to the wise² ? Neither in

quod Heathius vidit, significari potius *imbrem lapideum ab hostibus in summa propugnacula missum*. Primum enim utitur poëta verbo ἔρχεται, non δέσπεραι, aut simili. Deinde exterritas mulieres, præ metu vix sui compotes, prout meticulosorum mos est, ad ea solùm attendere consentaneum est, quæ terrorem augere possint, non ad ea quæ spem hostium impetum propulsandi ostendant.”—SCHÜTZ.

(1) Commentators have been puzzled to reconcile this expression with the appeal made by Eteocles, v. 72. in behalf of a city Ἑλλάδος φθεγγον χλευσαν. Pauw supposes ἔρεροφώνη only to allude to the dissension of opinion, or difference of voices between the contending parties; while Schütz and Heath consider the expression warranted by the dissimilarity of the Argive and Boeotian dialect. The interpretation of Butler is the most simple, as well as satisfactory : “ At vero ἔρεροφώνη tantum paulò gravius dictum ad miserationem pro alienigena vel hostili.”

(2) “ Potest vel ad virgines referri, ut v. 166. θρέμματ' οὐκ ἀνασχέρει· vel ad ipsum sermonem et ejulatus virginum, sicut Scholiastes accepit, et Grotius, qui hunc versum sententiam fecit. Rectius fortasse ad mulieres; ut sit sententia, vos θρέμματ' οὐκ ἀνασχέρει, vos inquam, σωφρόνων μισηματα interrogo.” STANLEY.—“ Fateor tamen mihi etiamnum perplacere eorum sententiam, qui ad αὐτέων, λακόζεων, has voces referendas judicant.” BLOMFIELD. The interpretation of Stanley is clearly to be preferred.

adversity nor in beloved prosperity, may I be fated to dwell with womankind: for in power, their arrogance is not to be endured; and in fear, they are a still greater evil to a house or city. And now, hurrying in these disorderly flights, ye spread, by your clamours, a heartless cowardice among the citizens, and assist in the greatest degree the cause of the enemy; while we within are ruined by ourselves. Such are the benefits you may reap from dwelling along with women. But if either man or woman, or other between these names¹, shall disobey my commands, the sentence of death shall be resolved against them, and they shall not escape the destruction of public stoning. For the works of war are a care to men: let not a woman take counsel for them²: but keeping within, she does not create mischief. Have you heard, or not heard? or do I speak to the deaf?

CHORUS.—O dear son of OEdipus, I trembled as I heard the din of the sounding chariots, when the naves of the circling wheels loudly rattled; and as I heard the guiding bits, that are forged in the fire, ceaselessly champed in the mouths of the horses!

ETEOCLES.—What then? Does the mariner attain the means of safety by flying from the rudder to the prow³, when his bark is labouring amid the billows of the ocean?

CHORUS.—No; but I came with haste to the ancient images of the Gods, placing my trust in their divinity, when arose the sound of the sleet of death descending at the gates. Then, in truth, was I impelled by fear to supplicate the blessed Gods, that they would stretch forth their power to save our city.

(1) “Locum verto, *Vir et saemina, et quicquid inter haec nomina, omitto;*
i.e. pueri, virgines, &c.”—BLOMFIELD.

(2) Άλλ’ εἰς οἰκον ιοῦσα τὰ σωτῆρις ἔργα κόμις,
Ιστόν τ’, ηλακτήρι τε, καὶ διμιτόλοισι κέλευν
“Ἐργον ἐποιησθαι” πόλεμος δ’ ἀνδρεσσι μελήσει
Πᾶσιν, ἐμοὶ δὲ μάλιστα, τοι Ἰλίῳ ἔγγεγδασιν. Hom. Il. §. 490.

(3) “Num, inquit, navita mari sœviente puppim relinquens, et ad
deos tutelares in prora positos confugiens, salutem consequutus est?”
—STANLEY.

ETEOCLES.—Pray that our towers continue proof against the hostile spears.

CHORUS.—Is not this to be granted by the Gods?

ETEOCLES.—Nay; it is said, that the Gods of a conquered city forsake it¹.

CHORUS.—O never, during my life, may this assemblage of Gods forsake us! and may I never behold the streets of this city scoured by the enemy, nor its people assailed by hostile flames!

ETEOCLES.—Do not, invoking the Gods, follow counsels to my hurt; for obedience is the mother of success, with power to save: so, at least, men say of it².

CHORUS.—It is: but to the Gods belongs a still higher might; and often, in misfortunes, it raises up their helpless victim from the bitter sorrow whose clouds are suspended above his eyes.

(1) “ Narrat Scholiastes, quod Trojani, cum expugnaretur civitas, Deos viderint simulachra sua auferentes; quod et Sophoclem in Xoanephoris retulisse ait. Huic verò commento accinit Euripides, in *Troad.* v. 25. sub personâ Neptuni:

Λείπω τὸ κλεισθνύ 'Ιλιον βωμούς τ' ἔμοις,
'Ερημία γαρ πόλιν ὅταν λάθη κακή,
Νοσεῖ τὸ τῶν θεῶν, οὐδὲ τυμάσθαι θελεῖ.

Et Virgilius, *Aen.* II. 351.

Excessere omnes adytis, arisque relictis,

Dii, quibus imperium hoc steterat.—

Ad quem locum adi sis Interpretes, præcipue Germanum Valentem Guellium.”—STANLEY.

In like manner, the Shekinah, or Divine Presence, was withdrawn from the ark of the first temple, before it was destroyed by the king of Babylon; and at the fall of Jerusalem were heard the dismaying sounds, *μεθιστάμεθα τῶν ἐντεῦθεν*. “ *Expassæ repente delubri fores, et audita major humana vox, Excedere Deos: simul ingens motus excedentium.*” Tacit. *Hist.* v. 13. In confirmation of this ancient superstition, Brunck has also quoted Livy, V. 15. “ *Sic disciplina Etrusca traditum esse, ut quandò aqua Albana abundasset, tum si eam Romanus ritè emisset, victoriam de Veientibus dari; antequam id fiat, Deos mœnia Veientium deserturos non esse.*” And we are informed by Macrobius, iii. 9. that the Romans always evoked the Gods of a besieged city.

(2) “ *Habes meam sententiam. Schütz. Potius, sic ferè dicitur: q. d. proverbialis est hoc sententia.*”—BUTLER.

ETEOCLES.—It is the part of men to offer sacrifices and rites to the Gods, amid hostile attempts ; and it is your duty, on the other hand, to be silent, and keep at home.

CHORUS.—By the blessing of the Gods, we dwell in an unconquered city ; and may its towers still be proof against the crowd of the enemy ! What indignation can feel offended at such words ?

ETEOCLES.—I am not displeased because you honour the race of the Gods ; but, lest you make the citizens faint-hearted, remain quiet, nor give way to extravagant fears.

CHORUS.—Hearing the sudden uproar, I came in startled terror to this citadel, an honoured abode.

ETEOCLES.—Do not now, if ye hear of the dying or the wounded, be eager to receive them with lamentations ; for by such fears of mortals Mars is strengthened.

CHORUS.—Even now I hear the snortings of the steeds.

ETEOCLES.—Do not now, though you hear them, attend too clearly to the sound.

CHORUS.—The city groans from its foundations, as the enemy encompasses it.

ETEOCLES.—Is it not enough, then, that I should consult about these dangers ?

CHORUS.—I fear ! for the blows fall thicker at the gates.

ETEOCLES.—Will you not be silent ? Utter no such words in the city.

CHORUS.—O associate band of Gods, do not betray our towers !

ETEOCLES.—Will you not, with a mischief, submit to these things in silence ?

CHORUS.—Ye Gods who guard this city, grant that I may not know captivity !

ETEOCLES.—You aid in making me and yourself and the city captive.

CHORUS.—O, almighty Jove, direct thy bolt against our enemies !

ETEOCLES.—O Jove, what a race hast thou made that of women !

CHORUS.—An unhappy race! as are the men whose city is taken.

ETEOCLES.—Again, laying hold of the images, you renew your cries!

CHORUS.—For, in the sinking of my soul, fear hurries away my tongue.

ETEOCLES.—Will you grant to my request a slight boon?

CHORUS.—Tell me, as quickly as possible; and I shall soon know.

ETEOCLES.—Be silent, O wretched woman! and do not excite fear in your friends.

CHORUS.—I seal my lips; and, with the rest, will submit to what is decreed.

ETEOCLES.—I prefer this to your former declaration: but farther, do you, keeping apart from the images, offer up the better prayer that the Gods may assist us; and having heard my prayers, do you afterwards awake the hymn of sacred and propitious strain, the Grecian ritual of sacrificial acclaim, inspiring confidence in your friends, and banishing their dread of the enemy. And I here vow, if our fortunes prosper, and the city be preserved, that, staining with the blood of sheep the altars of the Gods and sacrificing to them bulls, I will dedicate in the sacred temples the garments of the enemy, the spoils won by the spear from the foe, as trophies to the Gods who guard the city of this land, both those who rule over our plains and those who survey the forum, and to the fountains of Dirce; for those of Ismenus I forbear to name. Offer up such vows to the Gods, not indulging in groans nor in vain and frantic sabbings; for you shall not in any degree the more escape what is fated. But I, going, will station at the seven outlets of the walls six champions, with myself the seventh, to resist the enemy in gallant manner, before that hasty messengers and thickening reports shall come, and inflame us in the moment of emergency.

CHORUS.—Your words are a care to me; and my heart sleeps not, in consequence of its fears: for anxious

thoughts, possessing my bosom, inflame my alarm, on account of the bands that encompass our walls; even as some all-trembling dove fears, on account of her brood, the serpent, evil inmate of her nest¹: for some are advancing against the towers, with all their bands, and in full array—What will become of me!—and others hurl the rugged stones against the citizens, who are assailed on every side. Join all your efforts, ye Gods whose lineage is from Jove, to rescue the city and the people of Cadmus! To what plain of the earth that is better than this can ye transfer your abode, abandoning to our foes the fertile fields of this land, and the fount of Dirce, whose wave is fairest and most salubrious of all the streams that earth-encircling Neptune or the daughters of Tethys command to flow? Therefore, O Gods of our city, inflicting on those without the towers the disasters of slaughtered men and arms abandoned in flight, vouchsafe the triumph to our people; and, preserving the city, remain firmly in your glorious seats, in compliance with our piteous prayers! for it were lamentable to abandon to destruction so ancient² a city, the captive prey of the spear, ingloriously overthrown in smouldering ashes by an Achæan leader commissioned by heaven; and that our maids and matrons should be dragged away as slaves—alas! alas!—dragged by the hair like horses, their robes all rent around them. And the devastated city mourns aloud, all its booty perishing amid the confused uproar: even now my fears anticipate its fatal doom. For sad it is, for virgins scarce ripened in their bloom to pass from their homes on a hateful journey,

(1) ‘Ος δέ τ' ὀδόρεται δρυς ἐπὶ σφετέρους νεοσσοῖς
 Ολλυμένοις, οὓς' αἰδεὶς ὄφις, ἔτι νηπιάχοντας,
 Θάμνοις ἐν πυκνοῖσι κατεσθίει· οὐ δέ κατ' αὐτοὺς
 Πωτάται κλάξοντα μάλα λιγύ, πότνια μήτηρ·
 Οὐ γάρ ἔχει τέκνουσιν ἀπαρέστους.—— *Moschus, Idyl. 8. 21.*

(2) “Erat Ogyges rex perantiquus, quem alii Attice, alii Thebarum regem constituant, in quibus πύλας Ὀγύγιας volunt ab illo sic dictas, ipsani urbem Ogygiam: undè Statius bellum hoc Ogygium vocat, VII. 33. Propter verò regis illius antiquitatem, antiqua omnia vocabantur Ὀγύγια.”
 —STANLEY.

before they have known the rites of love that crop its bleeding flower. But why should I dwell on such scenes? I affirm, that the dead are happier in their lot than the living: for when a city is subdued, alas! alas! alas! many and sad are the calamities it endures: one drags away or kills another, or in a different direction bears fire; the whole city is sullied by smoke; and Mars, destroying the people and polluting piety, vents all the breathings of his rage: tumultuous clamours pervade the city; and against its walls approaches the engine to storm the towers: man is slain by man, with the spear; and the cries of infants at the breast are murmured inarticulately, being choked with blood; and rapine begins, accompanied with eager running through the streets: one, as he bears away the booty, gives the watchword to another; and the spoiler who hath been luckless calls on his fellow, wishing to have him as a partner, but neither desiring a less nor an equal share. What of these calamities is it possible to paint in words? The stores of various produce, being scattered on the ground, give pain to the beholder, and bitter is the countenance of the stewards of the house; and the gifts of earth, indiscriminately mixed, are borne away in vast and unvalued streams: and the youthful handmaids are first made acquainted with sorrow, in consequence of a hostile victor having gained command of their wretched and enslaved embraces; so that I trust life's gloomy close will first arrive, to bury beneath its tide our deeply-mournful woes.

SEMI-CHORUS.—The spy, as it appears to me, my friends, brings to us some new intelligence from the army, urging in haste the chariot-like speed of his steps.

SEMI-CHORUS.—And here, in truth, comes the king himself, the son of Œdipus, at an opportune moment, to hear the tidings of his messenger; and his haste also does not suffer his steps to be composed.

MESSENGER.—With your permission, I will relate, from my certain knowledge, intelligence of the enemy; and how each, by lot, has obtained his station at the gates.

Tydeus, indeed, already rages at the Prætian¹ gates; but the prophet² will not permit him to pass the stream of Ismenus, because the sacrifices are not propitious. But Tydeus, madly impatient, and thirsting for the battle, sends forth his shouts like some serpent hissing in the mid-day heat³; and he assails with reproach the wise prophet, son of Eucleus, for dallying through cowardice with the approach of death and battle. Loudly uttering such taunts, he waves on high the three o'er-arching plumes that crest his helmet; while the bells, wrought of brass, within his buckler, ring forth the note of fear. On his shield he bears this arrogant device—the sky emblazoned as bright with stars; and the bright full moon, the eye of night and glory of the heavens, shines conspicuously in the middle of the shield. Displaying such madness in the vaunting bearings of his arms, he shouts his war-cry by the banks of the river; and burning for the fray, he awaits its onset like some steed champing the bit, which, when it hears the sound of the trumpet, rushes forward to the war. Whom will you appoint to encounter this leader? Who, when bolt and bar give way, may be held sufficient to defend his station at the gates of Prætus?

ETEOCLES.—I should not be inclined to fear any ornaments of an enemy; nor do devices inflict wounds⁴. The crest and the bells pierce not, without the spear; and even this night, which you describe as blazing on his shield with the stars of heaven, may haply, in a certain signification,

(1) So called from a certain Prætus, who, being driven out from Thebes by Acrisius, fixed his abode before the gate, which in after-ages bore his name. See *Paus. IX. 12.*

(2) Amphiarau.

(3) “ *Ecce inter medios patriæ ciet agmina gentis*
Fulmineus Tydeus, jam lætus et integer artūs,
Ut primū strepuere tubæ, ceu lubricus alta
Anguis humo verni blanda et spiramina solis
Erigitur liber, senio et squalentibus annis
Exutus, lætisque minax interviret herbis!” *Stat. Theb. IV. 92.*

(4) “ *Non enim cristas vulnera facere; et per picta atque aurata scuta*
transire Romanum pilum.” — *Liv. X. 39.*

be prophetic of his doom: for if the shades of night shall settle on his dying eyes, this haughty device will rightly and justly fulfil the omen of its name on him that wears it, and he shall predict against himself the import of these boasting signs¹. But I will oppose to Tydeus the virtuous son of Astacus, as the defender of our gates; a hero of noblest soul, who honours the throne of Modesty, and hates the words of the proud; for he is slow to what is base, but is not wont to be a coward in action. His lineage is derived from the dragon race, whom Mars spared; and Melanippus² is, in truth, a son of this soil: but Mars will decide the event in the hazard of the die. In the mean while, as being truly of the same blood, he is with justice sent forth to ward the hostile spear from the mother to whom he owes his birth.

CHORUS.—May the Gods now grant my champion to prosper, since he advances, as becomes him, to fight in defence of his country! But I tremble on account of my friends, lest I see their deadly fate, as they fall.

MESSENGER.—May the Gods indeed grant that he prosper, as you pray! But Capaneus has obtained, by lot, his station at the Electran gates; a giant he³, of even loftier bearing than the other I before described, and his boasts are beyond the bounds of human pride. Against these

(1) “Hunc versum vulgo malè explicant: *Et ipse adversus se contumeliam vaticinaturus esset.* Neque melius Schütz., cum quo facit Schwenk.: *Et ipse secundum suam ipsius insolentiam vaticinabitur.* Sensus hīc videtur: *Et ipse superbiam illam, i.e. superbū illud signum, vaticinium vel omen in se ipsum fecerit.*”—WELLAUER.

(2) Melanippus was successful in the combat, and slew his antagonist: “Astacides Menalippus erat, nec prodidit ipse, Et vellet latuisse manum, sed gaudia turmæ Monstrabant trepidum, nam flexus in ilia Tydeus Submissum latus, et clypeī laxaverat orbem.” *Statius, VIII. 715.*

It is probable that he also fell himself in the battle; for Pausanias makes mention of his tomb, as being situated without the *Prætan gates*, on the road to Chalcis.

(3) “Unus ut è sylvis Pholoës habitator opacæ, Inter et Ætnæos æquus consurgere fratres.”

Statius, Theb. III. 604.

towers he utters threats, which I pray the God to frustrate! for he declares that he will sack the city, whether the God be willing or not; and that not even the angry bolt of Jove, hurled down to earth, should restrain him in his course¹; and he compares the lightning and the bolts of thunder to the mid-day heat of the sun. He has for his device a naked man bearing fire, who is armed with a blazing torch in his hands, and says, in golden letters, I WILL BURN THE CITY. Against such a warrior send ——. Who will encounter him? Who, without fear, will await the attack of this boastful chief?

ETEOCLES.—In his case, also, a second advantage is produced, in addition to the former². Of the vain pride of men, the tongue proves the true accuser. But Capaneus utters threats, which he is prepared to execute, to the dis-honour of the Gods; and practising his tongue in unwise exultation, he, though a mortal, vents his tumid boasts to be heard by Jove in heaven. But I trust that the fire-breathing bolt of thunder will descend with just vengeance on his head³, its flames in nought to be compared with the mid-day heat of the sun. But an opponent hath been chosen to meet him, even though he be so threatening in his words; a gallant spirit, the mighty Polyphontes, one whom we may trust to maintain our defence, if favoured

(1) “Capanei apud inferos etiam in Jovem ferocientis præclaram descriptionem habes apud Dantem in *Divina Commedia Infern.* Cant. XIV. unde imagines quasdam mutuatus est Miltonus noster in *Paradis. Amiss.* lib. I.”—BUTLER.

(2) “Intelligit autem idem fatum fore Capanei quodd Tydei.”—STANLEY.

(3) We are informed by Euripides that his fate was such as Eteocles predicts:—

“Ηδη διπερβαίνοντα γείσσα τειχέων
Βάλλει κεραυνῷ Ζεύς γυν.—— *Phæn.* 1187.

And Vegetius, IV. 21. accounts on more common principles for the fact: “Qui scalis in obsidione urbium utuntur frequenter periculum sustinent; exemplo Capanei, à quo primùm scalarum propugnatio perhibetur inventa, qui tantâ mole lapidum fuit obrutus à Thebanis, ut fulminibus dicatur extinctus.”

by Diana our guardian Power, and aided by the other Gods.—Tell of some other, who has obtained his station at a different gate.

CHORUS.—May he perish who threatens such outrage to the city ! and may the bolt of thunder check his career, before he rushes within my home, and with conquering spear bears me away from my virgin chambers !

MESSENGER.—I will now speak of him who hath next obtained his station at the gates. For Eteocles was the third to whom the third lot leapt from the inverted brazen helmet, appointing him to lead his bands against the Neitan gates : and he turns upon the plain his steeds, that fret against their frontlet trappings, and pant to pour their fury against the gates ; and their bridles ring wildly, being filled with the breath of their snorting nostrils. But his shield hath been fashioned with no mean device : for a warrior, in full armour, is advancing up the steps of a ladder to the tower of the enemy, wishing to storm it ; and he too exclaims, in the syllables of letters, that not even Mars should force him from the battlements. Against this leader send also an opponent on whom we may rely, to ward off the yoke of slavery from the city.

ETEOCLES.—I would willingly send such a man, and may it be with the favour of fortune ! for he hath already been sent, a hero who bears no boast to the war, Megareus, the son of Creon, who owns his lineage from the teeth of the dragon ; and who will not retreat from the gates, daunted by the mad noise of neighing horses, but, either dying, shall repay the debt of nurture to his native land, or, taking both the two men and the city on the shield, shall adorn with spoils the house of his father.—Now boast of another, nor be unwilling to tell me.

CHORUS.—I pray that this chief may prosper, the champion of our homes ! and that his adversaries may fail ; and, as they utter arrogant threats against the city, in the madness of their souls, thus may Jove, the avenger, look down on them in his wrath !

MESSENGER.—Another, the fourth, having the neighbouring gates of Onca¹ Minerva allotted him, stands by them, loudly shouting, the haughty bearing and giant form of Hippomedon. I shuddered as he moved around the vast circumference—I mean the orb of his shield : I will not deny it. But he that made the device was no mean artist, who furnished this representation to the shield—a Typhon, emitting from his fire-breathing mouth the dark smoke, the flickering brother of flame ; and the orbed boss of the hollow shield hath been made firm with wreaths of serpents. But he himself raised the shout of battle, and, inspired by Mars, maddens, like some Mænad², for the combat, flashing terror from his eyes. We must guard well against the attempts of such an enemy ; for fear is already excited at the gates by his boasts.

ETEOCLES.—In the first place, Onca Minerva, who dwells near our city, the neighbour of its gates, will, in hatred of the insolence of this man, repel him from her young, like some noxious dragon ; and Hyperbius, the virtuous son of Oenops, has been chosen to encounter him, foe with foe, willing to question his fate in the crisis of fortune, and faultless in form, in courage, and in the array of his arms. Mercury has, with good reason, brought them together : for the hero is hostile to the hero with whom he will engage, and they will bring to the conflict hostile Gods on their shields : for Hippomedon bears the fire-breathing Typhon ; but on the shield of Hyperbius, father Jove is represented standing with his blazing bolt in his hand ; and no one has yet seen Jove in any conflict subdued. Such, then, is the friendship of the Deities ; and we are on the side of the victors, and they of the vanquished, if Jove at least be stronger in fight than

(1) Minerva derived this appellation from a village of Boeotia, where Cadmus had erected her statue.

(2) ——— “ Qualis commotis excita sacris
Thyias, ubi audito stimulant trieterica Baccho
Orgia, nocturnusque vocat clamore Cithaeron.”

Typhon. But it is reasonable to suppose that the mortal antagonists will have corresponding fortunes ; and, in accordance with the device, may Jove, who is represented on the shield of Hyperbius, prove his preserver !

CHORUS.—I trust that he, who bears on his shield the adversary of Jove, the hateful form of the earth-born deity, an image abhorred both by mortals and the long-lived Gods, shall lay his head in dust before the gates !

MESSENGER.—May it be so !—But I will now tell of the fifth, who is stationed at the fifth Borrean gates, beside the very tomb of Amphion, the son of Jove ; and he swears by the spear which he bears, daring to hold it in higher reverence than a God¹ and dearer than his eyes, that he will lay waste the city of the Cadmeans, even in spite of Jove. Thus boasts the offspring of a mother whose dwelling was amid the mountains, a hero of beauteous aspect, and endowed with manly vigour in his youth ; for the down is just appearing on his cheek, and the thick hairs engendered by his ripening years begin to arise. But he, having a savage spirit, not in accordance with the name he derived from the virgin nymph², and a stern countenance, abides at his station. Not without boasts, however, does he stand beside our gates ; for he brandishes on his brazen shield the disgrace of this city, the bright embossed figure of the ravenous Sphinx, affixed by studs to the orbéd defence of his body ; and she bears in her talons a man, one of the Cadmeans, so that the greatest number of darts should fall on him³. But this youth, the Arcadian Parthenopæus,

(1) “ *Dextra, mihi Deus, et telum, quod missile libro.*”

Virg. Aen. X. 773.

(2) Parthenopæus was the son of Meleager and Atalanta ; and derived his name from the circumstance of his mother having been one of the virgin attendants of Diana. Statius has also celebrated him for his beauty :

“ *Pulchrior haud ulli triste ad discriminem ituro*

Vultus, et egregiae tanta indulgentia formæ :

Nec desunt animi, veniat modò fortior ætas.”

Theb. IV. 251.

(3) The figure of the Theban on the shield ; and not Parthenopæus himself, as it has been interpreted by Heath.

having come, seems as if he would not sell the fight, nor disgrace the distant journey of this expedition; and he, a hero such as I have described, having dwelt as a stranger in Argos, and now repaying to it the splendid recompense of his nurture, utters threats against these towers, which I pray the God to frustrate.

ETEOCLES.—Would that they may receive from the Gods the same doom that they design against us in these impious boasts! for then should they surely perish, in utter ruin and misery. But there is opposed also to the Arcadian of whom you speak, a man whose tongue boasts not of prowess, but whose hand is awake to a warrior's deeds; Actor, the brother of the chief I last mentioned; and one who will not permit a boasting tongue, unseconded by action, to come within the gates and augment our evils; nor will admit within the city him who bears on his hostile shield the image of that savage and hateful monster, who, being without, shall have no cause to thank him who attempts to bear her within, in consequence of meeting with many a blow beneath our walls. If the Gods be willing, I would gladly prove true in the event I foretell.

CHORUS.—The words I have heard penetrate to my heart; and the locks of my hair stand on end, as I hear the proud boasts of these vaunting and impious men. I therefore pray that the Gods may destroy them in this land!

MESSENGER.—I will now, if you please, tell of the sixth, a chief of most modest demeanour, and yet unequalled in courage, the might of the prophet Amphiaraus. Stationed at the Homoloian¹ gates, he reviles with many reproaches the valiant Tydeus², denouncing him as a homi-

(1) The Homoloian gates derived their name, according to one of the Scholiasts, from a daughter of Niobe. This explanation is more satisfactory than that which ascribes the honour of the title to the Homoloian Jupiter; as we are still left in ignorance, by the latter, of the meaning of the epithet, as applied to the God.

(2) Amphiaraus directs his reproaches against Tydeus, as being the chief instigator of the war; which he had himself dissuaded, and of which his prophetic power enabled him to foresee the fatal termination.

cide', the disturber of the state, the principal author of calamities to Argos, the summoner of the Fury, the minister of slaughter, and the adviser that prompted Adrastus to these evils. And next approaching your brother, the mighty Polynices, with scowling eye, and twice dividing his name into syllables, he calls on him, and utters these words from his lips :—" Truly it is a godlike deed, and by Gods esteemed, to give to devastation the city of your fathers and the Gods of your country, invading them with a foreign enemy ! But what plea of right shall staunch the fount of a mother's tears ? Shall thy native land, when conquered by the spear in consequence of thy exertions, ever conspire to aid thee ? I indeed shall fatten its soil, lying in a hostile land a prophet within the tomb. But now for the battle ! I look not for a coward's death." Thus spoke the prophet, as he waved on high the shining orb of his brazen shield : but within that orb no device appeared ; for he does not wish to appear, but to be just*, cultivating in his soul those deep furrows from which spring the counsels of wisdom. I recommend to you to send wise and brave opponents to meet him, for terrible is the might of the warrior who reverences the Gods.

ETEOCLES.—Alas for the omen that unites a just man with that impious crew ! In all the affairs of life there is nothing more hurtful than to hold communion with the wicked, and no harvest of advantage is to be reaped from it. For either a pious man, having embarked in a vessel with mariners prone to violence and with some deed of deepest sin, perishes along with a race of men condemned by heaven ; or living, himself upright among fellow-citizens who violate the laws of hospitality and disregard the Gods, having justly fallen into the same toils and

(1) Tydeus was the son of Æneus the king of Calydon, but had fled to Argos on account of having killed one of his kinsmen.

(2) " *Huic fabulæ primùm actæ interfuit Aristides cognominatus Justus; qui ad hæc verba, totius theatri oculos in se conversos habuit.* Plutarch. *Apophtheg. Reg. et duc.* p. 186. *Tale Sallustianum illud de M. Catone, Bell. Catil. c. 57. Esse quam videri bonus malebat.*"—STANLEY.

being struck with the scourge of the God, he sinks a victim in the common ruin. Thus this prophet, (I mean the son of Oeclues,) temperate, just, virtuous, pious, and famed for skill in his art, having, in spite of his better judgment, associated himself with companions impious in their deeds and arrogant in their words, shall, if Jove be willing, share in the overthrow of those who have undertaken this distant expedition in the vain hope of again returning. I therefore think that he will not even approach to the gates; not through fear or cowardice of disposition, but because he knows that he must die in this battle, if there is to be fulfilment to the oracles of Apollo. But he is wont to be silent, or to speak what suits the occasion. Notwithstanding, we shall appoint against him the mighty Lasthenes a guardian of our gates, no friend to strangers, with the wisdom of age in his mind but the vigour of youth in his person, keen in the glance of his eye, and not slow with his hand to snatch from beside his shield his unsheathed weapon. But the success of mortals is the gift of the Gods.

CHORUS.—May the Gods, hearing my just supplications, favourably accord success to the city, scattering, in the deadly strife of the spear, the invaders of our country! and may Jove, repelling them from these towers, slay them with his bolt of thunder!

MESSENGER.—I will now relate of the seventh leader, at the seventh gate—your own brother; what calamities he imprecates, and entreats, by vows, to befall the city;—that, having scaled its towers and been proclaimed king of the land, and having loudly raised the pœan of capture, he may encounter you, and, slaying you, die by your side; or, if you live, repay, in the same manner, with exile, you who stripped him of his honours and drove him forth from the land. Thus the mighty Polynices exclaims, and vehemently implores the Gods of his race and of his native country to regard his prayers. But he bears a shield, fresh from the forge and light to the arm, with a double device attached to it; for a certain woman leads under her

temperate guidance a warrior embossed in gold and appearing armed to the view ; and she says, according to the purport of the letters, “ My name is Justice ; and I will both restore this man, and he shall obtain possession of the city of his fathers, and return to his home.” Such are their devices¹. But do you yourself now determine whom you think it best to send ; so that you may never blame me on account of my intelligence, and you may know yourself how to direct the city aright.

ETEOCLES.—O race of Œdipus, rendered frantic by heaven and the great abhorrence of the Gods ! O sad source from which I have sprung ! Now, too surely, (woe is me !) are the curses of my father fulfilled. But it is neither fitting to weep nor to lament, lest thence a more intolerable cause of sorrow should be engendered. But I say to Polynices, who hath rightly derived his name from contention, that we shall soon know what his devices will produce ; and whether the golden letters, that foolishly display on his shield the madness of his mind, will effect his return. If Justice, the virgin daughter of Jove, were present to his deeds and thoughts, this might haply be ; but Justice never regarded him with favour, nor claimed him as her own, neither at the time when he escaped from the darkness of his mother’s womb, nor in his infancy, nor in his youth, nor in the thickening of the hairs of his beard ; nor do I deem she will now come to his assistance, in this unjust occupation of his native country : for Justice would most justly be held unworthy of her name, were she to join the cause of a man who is prone to extreme violence in his thoughts. Trusting to these hopes, I go, and will myself encounter him. Who may more justly claim this combat ? I will engage in it, leader with leader, brother with brother, and foe with foe ! Bring, with all speed, my greaves, the armour of defence against the spear and stones !

(1) This scene, which is magnificent in its descriptions and general detail, is also curious, as affording us the earliest notice that is known of heraldic bearings.

CHORUS.—Do not, dearest of men, son of Oedipus, be like in temper to him whom you have so much reviled ! Let it suffice that the Cadmean citizens meet the Argives in battle ; for their blood may be atoned for : but when brothers die, each by the other's hand, there is no old age incident to such pollution.

ETEOCLES.—If any one must submit to evils, let it be without disgrace ; for this is the only gain that results to the dead : but from what is cowardly or base you cannot boast of any fair fame.

CHORUS.—And dost thou abide by thy resolution, my son ? O be not hurried away by the maddening rage for battle that fills thy mind, but banish the first emotions of baneful passion !

ETEOCLES.—Since the God with all his power urges our fates to their close, let the whole race of Laius, hated by Apollo and destined to Cocytus, drift before the gale to its waters !

CHORUS.—Too fierce is that cannibal desire that urges thee to seek the blood of slaughter that is forbidden to be shed, and bitter in the fruits of its retribution.

ETEOCLES.—For the cruel and fatal curse of my dear father presents itself before me with glazed and tearless eyes, suggesting the advantage of an early rather than a later death¹.

CHORUS.—But do not you hasten its completion ; for you shall not be esteemed base, if you order well your life. The Fury disturbs not with her murky tempests the abodes of men from whose hands the Gods receive the sacrifice.

ETEOCLES.—We are already in a manner abandoned by heaven ; and the joy produced by our destruction is gratefully welcomed by the Gods. Why then should we any longer court a delay of death ?

CHORUS.—Even now, when the opportunity is presented

(1) Commentators are not by any means agreed as to the meaning of this passage. Wellauer, the last Editor of our Poet, takes it thus: “*Desuntians lucrum, quod prius erit morte posteriore*, i.e. victoriam, quam sequitur mors, qui sensus, consultò obscurius expressus, aptissimus videtur.”

to thee; since Fortune, veering to a late change of spirit, may yet visit thee, perchance, with more genial gales: but now her fury is at the height.

ETEOCLES.—For the curses of OEdipus have furiously burst forth; and too true were the visions of the dreams of night that foretold the distribution of my father's wealth.

CHORUS.—O listen, though reluctant, to a woman's prayer!

ETEOCLES.—Speak, then, that which I may permit; and be brief as is fitting.

CHORUS.—Do not tread the path that leads to the seventh gate.

ETEOCLES.—You cannot turn by words the whetted edge of my purpose.

CHORUS.—The God, however, honours victory, even when obtained without glory¹.

ETEOCLES.—It befits not an armed chief to approve of such a sentiment.

CHORUS.—Can you wish to shed the blood of your own brother?

ETEOCLES.—If the Gods grant my wishes, he shall not escape unharmed.

CHORUS.—I shudder with dread of the Fiend that lays waste this house, a Goddess not bearing the trace of heavenly nature, too truly felt, too sadly predicted; lest now, listening to the prayers of a father, she fulfil the angry curses of the maddened OEdipus. This murderous contention of his children excites her aid; and the Chalybian stranger, from the land of the Scythians, is dealing out the lots, a bitter divider of the wealth of their possessions, the ruthless sword, that but assigns them so much land for their dwelling as they shall occupy when dead, baffled in their hopes of a wider domain. But when they shall have fallen by mutual slaughter, each by a brother's hand, and the dust of the earth have absorbed the black and gory

(1) “*Nicη κακη* hic non est *victoria injusta*, sed, ut benē Stanleius, *in-gloria*, i.e. ab homine ignavo, et qui pericula ipse detrectat, aliorum virtute reportata.”—HEATH.

clots of their blood, who shall bring the expiation? who shall cleanse them from that stain? Alas for the new sorrows of the house that mingle with its ancient ills! For I speak of the old transgression of the race visited by a speedy punishment;—but it remains to the third generation;—when Laius, (in spite of Apollo, who thrice announced from the central shrines of Pytho that if he died without offspring he should save the city,) being overcome by the persuasions of his friends¹, begat in his madness the author of his own death, the parricide Oedipus, who dared to plant in the forbidden field from which he sprung the germ of future bloodshed². Madness united the infatuated pair; and like a sea, it rolls onward the waves of calamity, one subsiding as another rears its triple crest, and loudly beats against the stern of the city. But between us and destruction our towers extend their defence only for a slight breadth; and I fear, lest, along with our princes, the city be subdued: for the ancient curses are fulfilled, and the sad reconciliation and its bloody close pass not away. The prosperity of inventive men, when enriched to excess, entails the necessity of casting overboard from the stern. For whom of men did the Gods and his fellow-citizens and the fruitful generations of mortals so much admire, as they honoured Oedipus, when he removed from this country the pest that destroyed its inhabitants? But after he regained his senses, being grieved on account of his unhappy nuptials and impatient of suffering, he wrought, in the phrensy of his spirit, two evil designs;—with the hand that slew his father, he deprived himself of his eyes, that were more valuable to him than his children; and indignant on account of his stinted subsistence, he poured forth the curses of bitter imprecation on his sons, and prayed that with sword in hand they might one day divide their possessions: and now I tremble, lest Erinnys, whose feet are swift to shed blood, fulfil that prayer.

(1) "A quibus ebrius factus cum uxore concubuit."—STANLEY,

(2) In allusion to his sons, Eteocles and Polynices.

MESSENGER.—Be of good cheer, ye virgins, daughters of our dames ! This country has escaped the yoke of slavery : the boastings of the men of violence have been humbled : and the city is both past the dangers of the storm, and in the many dashings of the waves hath not admitted their surge. Our towers remain proof against assault ; and we have fenced the gates with champions, who, in the single combat, bore them worthy of the trust. At six gates our fortunes, for the most part, have prospered ; but at the seventh, King Apollo has taken his place, the awful seventh leader, wreaking on the race of Ædipus the ancient infatuation of Laius.

CHORUS.—What unwonted¹ event has happened to the city ?

MESSENGER.—The chiefs have died by mutual slaughter.

CHORUS.—Who ? what sayest thou ? I am distracted through terror of your words.

MESSENGER.—Now, composing yourself, hear my answer —the children of Ædipus.

CHORUS.—Alas for my afflictions ! I am the prophetess of evils !

MESSENGER.—Too truly are they laid low in dust !

CHORUS.—And have they come to this ? Sad, indeed, is your intelligence ! yet still relate it.

MESSENGER.—Too fatally, as I have told, they fell, each by a brother's hand.

CHORUS.—Thus a common fate was shared by both !

MESSENGER.—Even the fate which destroys all their unhappy race.

CHORUS.—We may both rejoice and mourn at the event : rejoicing, that our country has been preserved ; but mourning, that its princes, the two leaders, have divided all the

(1) *Neōteros* here, as well as in other passages of Æschylus, means more than *new*, which is the translation generally given of it, and implies, even in its most literal sense, *nova indolis*, or *novi generis*. Some strange and momentous consequence might be expected from the marked interference of Apollo ; and the question of the Chorus very naturally points to such a conclusion.

possessions of their wealth with the well-forged Scythian sword. And they shall gain of their territories only so much as they occupy in the tomb; being hurried away to destruction, according to the dark omens of their father's curses.

MESSENGER.—The city is saved; but the earth hath drunk the blood of the royal brothers, who perished by mutual slaughter.

CHORUS.—O mighty Jove, and guardian Gods of our city, who manifestly defend these towers of Cadmus! whether shall I rejoice, and wake the strains of triumph to the God that hath preserved our country from danger? or shall I shed the tear for the wretched death of its ill-fated and childless chiefs, who, justifying too truly by their thirst of contention the omen of a name, perished in their impious designs? O dark and fatal curse of the race of Oedipus! the chill of horror is curdling around my heart! With the phrensy of a Mænad I framed this dirge for their burial, when I heard that they lay dead amid their reeking blood, the victims of a mournful slaughter. How fatal in its omens was their encounter of the spear! The import of their father's curses hath been fulfilled, and hath not failed in its effect: the counsels of the unbelieving Laius pervade to his posterity with their punishment: and anxious cares are felt through the city; for the vengeance of heaven hath not been predicted in vain. O ye lamented youths! ye have wrought in this an incredible deed, and sufferings have visited you in sad reality. The proof is manifest; and our eyes behold, what the messenger described, a twofold grief: the mishap of the two chiefs who perished by each other's hands, and the sufferings of the fate which they shared, are all now perfected. In what terms shall I characterize them? how otherwise, than as being troubles upon troubles that never forsake this house? But do ye, O my friends! ply adown the tide of sorrow the speeding stroke of the hands on the head, which ever conducts through Acheron the sacred bark of

sable sails, whose freight is groans, and whose crew the dead, bearing it to that unseen shore that is never trod by Apollo, and to the abodes that are appointed for all living.—But cease; for here come Antigone and Ismene, to fulfil a mournful duty in singing the dirge for their brothers. I deem that in no equivocal grief they will pour from their lovely and shapely bosoms a strain that is worthy of their woe. But it is fitting, before they uplift their voices, that we should utter the dismal notes of the hymn of Erynnis, and chaunt to Pluto his hateful pæan. Alas! ye that are the most unhappy in your brothers of all that bind the girdle around their robes, I weep, I groan, and, without deceit, pour forth from my soul its sincere sorrows!

SEM.—Alas! alas! ye infatuated youths, who, deaf to the persuasions of your friends and unwearied in calamities, sought, beneath an evil destiny, to obtain by the spear the possession of your father's house!

SEM.—Wretched, indeed, they were, who met with a wretched death, to the ruin of their house.

SEM.—Alas! alas! ye who overthrew the walls of your house, and saw a bitter reign as kings, have now been reconciled by the sword!

SEM.—And the awful Fury of your father OEdipus hath fulfilled too truly his curses.

SEM.—Pierced through the left breast.

SEM.—Yes, and pierced through their kindred sides.

SEM.—Alas! alas! for your unhappy fate! and alas for the curses of the dead repaying with death!

SEM.—You speak of the mortal blow.

SEM.—I speak of them who were fatally wounded in their fortunes and their lives.

SEM.—With silent fury, and with fatal discord, impre- cated by their father.

CHORUS.—But lamentation pervades even the city: its towers groan, and the land mourns through affection for its sons: and for their posterity remain the possessions on account of which contention, and death in the end, came on

the unhappy brothers. In the fierceness of their hearts, they divided their possessions, so as to obtain an equal share ; but the arbiter gave not satisfaction to their friends, nor did joy result from the strife.

SEM.—Pierced by the sword, here they lie : and prepared by the sword, there awaits them—perhaps some one might ask, What ?—the inheritance of the tombs of their fathers.

SEM.—Our heart-rending sorrow sends forth to them its deep notes from the house, the grief as the loss its own, with thoughts of woe and averse to joy, pouring forth tears in sincerity from the soul, which pines away in affliction, as I weep for these two princes.

SEM.—We may assert with truth of these unhappy youths, that they wrought many evils to the citizens, and to the ranks of all the strangers who fell thickly in the fight.

SEM.—Wretched was she who bore them, above all women as many as have been called mothers. Having taken her own son as husband, she brought forth these children ; and they have thus fallen by the mutual slaughter of kindred hands.

SEM.—Kindred indeed they were, yet deadly to the uttermost, in that unkind severing, in the phrensy of anger and the close of the strife. But their enmity has ceased, and their life-blood is mingled in the reeking earth ; and too truly they are of the same blood ! Fatal was the arbiter of their contentions, the stranger from beyond the sea, the whetted sword rushing from the fire ; and Mars, making their father's curses true, proved a fatal and cruel divider of their wealth. Unhappy youths ! they have only obtained a portion of calamities inflicted by heaven ; and in the tomb their possessions of earth shall be boundless. Alas ! ye have made this house teem with a thousand woes ; and at its fall these Furies wildly raised the notes of triumph on high, as its race gave way in utter rout and ruin. And the Fiend hath placed the trophies of Atè at the gates where they slew each other ; and having now made both a prey, hath ceased from havoc.

ANTIGONE, ISMENE.

ANTIGONE.—Struck, you struck¹.

ISMENE.—And you died, having slain.

ANT.—You slew with the spear.

ISM.—And by the spear you died.

ANT.—Inflicting anguish.

ISM.—And suffering anguish in return.

ANT.—Let the wail arise.

ISM.—Let the tears flow.

ANT.—Having slain, he shall lie among the dead.

ISM.—Alas! alas!

ANT.—My mind is maddened by grief.

ISM.—And my heart mourns within me.

ANT.—Alas! you require all our tears.

ISM.—And you, too, are utterly wretched.

ANT.—By a friend you died.

ISM.—And a friend you slew.

ANT.—Double woes to tell!

ISM.—And double woes to see!

ANT.—Our calamities approach near to their calamities.

ISM.—And we sisters are near our brothers.

CHORUS.—Alas! alas! thou destiny of sorrow that loadest us with evils! and thou awful shade² of Oedipus, dark Fiend, too truly thy influence is of mighty power!

ANT.—Alas! alas! these calamities horrible to view——

(1) "In alternis quæ sequuntur dictis observandum est, Antigonem semper de Polynice, Ismenen verò Eteocle loqui."—SCHÜTZ.

(2) "Miror utrumque Scholiastem hoc acceperisse, quasi Oedipus adhuc in vivis fuerit, cum in totâ hâc fabulâ nihil reperiatur quod id suadere possit. Gemina fuit veterum de hâc re sententia: alii, quorum Diodorus Siculus, tradunt Oedipi filios, cum ad ætatem pervenissent, patrem suum coëgisse ob dedecus non egredi domum, ipsos verò alternatim regnum administrasse: at ex Pausaniâ et Suidâ constat fratres nondum imperium suscepisse, donec Oedipus vitâ cesserat. Priorem licet sententiam sequuntur Sophocles et Euripides, nihil tamen exigit quin credam Aeschylum posterioris fuisse. *Æs* et *umbras* de mortui manibus frequentissimè sumuntur."—STANLEY.

ISM.—He displayed to me after his return from exile.

ANT.—Nor did he come back when he had slain.

ISM.—But after having been saved, he lost his life.

ANT.—Too truly he lost it.

ISM.—Yes, and deprived his brother of his life.

ANT.—Wretched race !

ISM.—Wretched have been their sufferings.

ANT.—And wretched their griefs, in accordance with the omen of the name¹.

ISM.—Their fortunes have been steeped in deadliest calamity.

ANT.—Mournful to tell.

ISM.—And mournful to see.

CHORUS.—Alas ! alas ! thou destiny of sorrow, that loadest us with evils ! and thou, awful shade of Oedipus, dark Fiend, too truly thy influence is of mighty power !

ANT.—You, for one, know it by experience.

ISM.—And you, too, have learned it no later.

ANT.—When you returned to the city.

ISM.—An adversary of the spear to your brother.

ANT.—Mournful to tell.

ISM.—Mournful to see.

ANT.—Alas ! what anguish !

ISM.—Alas ! what evils to this house !

ANT.—Alas ! and also to this land ; but, above all, to me !

ISM.—Alas ! alas ! and still more to me !

ANT.—Alas ! alas ! for our wretched sorrows.

ISM.—O king Eteocles, our leader !

ANT.—O ye, who have been of all the most miserable !

ISM.—Alas ! alas ! ye were driven, by phrensy, to ill.

ANT.—Alas ! alas ! where shall we lay them in earth ?

ISM.—Alas ! alas ! in the most honourable tomb.

(1) “ Κῆδεα nimis pro fratribus, quorum cura nondū sorores deseruerat. ‘Ομονυμα, quia ambo dulcissimo fratrum nomine compellandi erant.” SCHÜTZ.—“ Sed aliter Interpres Gallicus, et, ni fallor, rectius, cui præcessit.” HEATH.—“ *Race accablée de maux déplorables, présagés par ton nom* (à Polynice). Sæpe jam suprà vidimus *Æschylum* talibus allusionibus delectari.”—BUTLER.

ANT.—Alas ! alas ! their slaughtered bodies shall lie beside our father.¹

HERALD.

It is my duty to announce what has been approved of, and resolved upon, by the leaders of the people, in this city of Cadmus. It has been decreed to bury this body of Eteocles, on account of his good-will towards the country, with a friendly sepulture in its soil: for he met with death in the city while repelling the enemy; and, free from pollution with respect to the sacred rights of his country, he fell without a stain, where it is honourable for the young to die. Concerning Eteocles, indeed, it has thus been commanded me to speak: but it has been decreed to cast out the dead body of his brother Polynices, unburied, a prey to dogs; since he would have brought ruin on this land of Cadmus, if some one of the Gods had not stood in opposition to his spear: and even in death he shall be held polluted in the sight of his country's Gods, whom he dis honouring, attempted to storm the city, by leading a foreign army against it. It therefore seems good, that he, being entombed with ignominy by winged birds, should receive his just reward; and that neither the labour of the hand in raising the mound attend his burial, nor that men honour him with the strains of shrill lamentation, but that he be disgracefully deprived of being borne to his funeral by his friends. Such resolutions have seemed good to the rulers of the Cadmeans.

ANTIGONE.—But I say to the rulers of the Cadmeans, that, if no other be willing to aid me in his burial, I will bury him, and will expose myself to the danger in performing this duty to my brother ! Nor do I feel

(1) Mr. Thomas Campbell, in his *Lectures on Poetry*, ventures to remark of this scene, that “The lamentations of Antigone and Ismene over their brothers form a terrible duo, to which no translation has ever done, or probably ever will do, justice.” If the authority were good, this dictum would be discouraging: but we have no hesitation in asserting, to the contrary, that the whole passage is, even in the original, full of unnatural absurdity, and alike unworthy of the subject and the Poet.

ashamed to display this disobedience, in opposition to the commands of the State. There is a strong tie in the common source from which we sprung, of our wretched mother and of our unhappy father: share therefore in his sorrows, O my soul! with kindred affection, willing with the unwilling, living with the dead. But the ravenous wolves shall not mangle his flesh!—let no one suppose it; for I myself, though a woman, will contrive for him a tomb, and a grave beneath the ground, bearing earth in the fold of my robe of fine linen, and with my own hands will cover him: let no one think the contrary: a skill equal to effect its purpose shall second my courage.

HERALD.—I bid you not act violently against the State, in this design.

ANT.—And I bid you not bring your idle messages to me.

HERALD.—The people, however, are severe, after having escaped from dangers.

ANT.—Severe indeed! but still, he shall not be unburied.

HERALD.—But will you honour with a tomb him whom the city condemns?

ANT.—His fortunes hitherto have not been held in dishonour by the Gods¹.

HERALD.—They have not, before at least he exposed this country to danger.

ANT.—Having suffered evils, he retaliated the same.

HERALD.—But his enterprise was directed against all, instead of one. Contention is the last Goddess to finish a dispute.

ANT.—But I will bury him: do not waste your words.

HERALD.—But know that you do it on your own counsel; for I forbid it.

(1) “ Locus mihi sic interpretandus videtur: *Num jam à Diis hīo de honestatus est?* ut *ω̄ διατερίμηται* positum sit pro *η̄τερίμηται*. Quarē interrogationis notam addidi, quæ vulgè abest. Huic deinde interrogatiōni aptissimum est quod respondet præco.”—WELLAUER.

CHORUS.—Alas! alas! O fatal Furies, triumphant in the destruction of this race! how utterly have ye extirpated the family of Oedipus! What will become of me?—what shall I do?—what can I devise? How shall I endure, neither to weep for your death, nor to conduct your body to the tomb? I would willingly, but that I fear and shrink from the threats of the citizens. You¹, indeed, shall have many a mourner; but he², the wretched, departs, unlamented, with only the sorrowful dirges of a sister. Who can endure such cruelty?

SEM.—Let the city fulfil, or not fulfil, its threats against those who lament Polynices. We indeed will go; and, leading the procession, will assist at his burial. For this grief is common to the people, and the State at different times approves of different maxims of justice.

SEM.—But we will accompany Eteocles, as the State and justice alike approve; for, next to the blessed Gods and the power of Jupiter, he saved the city of the Cadmeans from being destroyed and fatally overwhelmed by the torrent of foreign enemies.

(1) Eteocles.

(2) Polynices.

THE PERSIANS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

CHORUS.

ATOSSA.

MESSENGER.

GHOST OF DARIUS.

XERXES.

THE PERSIANS.

CHORUS.

WE are the Faithful Band left by the Persians who departed to the shores of Greece, the guardians of these wealthy seats¹ and their stores of gold, whom our king himself, Xerxes, the royal son of Darius, selected, on account of eminence, to bear sway over the country. But my mind is already dreadfully agitated within my breast, through evil presage respecting the return of the king, and of his warlike bands that went forth richly arrayed in gold; for all the strength of the land hath departed from Asia, and she² moans for the absence of her youthful hero. And neither does any courier nor horseman come to the city of the Persians; who, forsaking Susa and Ecbatana and the ancient bulwarks of Cissia, departed on their way, some mounted on the steed, and some in ships, and some in the slow ranks of infantry, supplying the thick array of

(1) The scene is laid in Susa, which, after the conquests of Cyrus, became famous for its wealth and splendour. Aristagoras described its royal treasures in such glowing colours, that he nearly tempted Cleomenes to undertake the invasion of Persia; and when the haughty capital yielded in a later day to the arms of Alexander, the gold and silver that rewarded his victory exceeded even the inflamed expectations of Grecian cupidity. See Herod. V. 49. and Diod. Sic. xvii. 6.

(2) We agree with Brunck in separating 'Ασία from its compound, and making it the nominative to βασίκη. This construction is more natural than the one adopted by Blomfield and Pauw, who refer back for the nominative to θυμός, and consider the intermediate clause to be parenthetical. Wellauer inclines to the same opinion; but is so little satisfied with it, that he suspects the passage to be corrupt.

war : such as Amistres, and Artaphrenes, and Megabazes, and Astaspes, leaders of the Persians, kings that own the sovereignty of the great king, rush to the war, the commanders of a countless host, both those who quell by the bow and those who rein the steed, terrible in truth to behold, and desperate in the fight through their gallant glory of soul. And there is Artembares exulting in his war-horse, and Masistres, and the brave Imæus resistless with the bow, and Pharandaces urging onwards his steeds, and Sosthanes. And the great and widely-fertilizing Nile hath sent others—Susiscanes, Pegastagon of Ægyptian birth, and the mighty Arsames the ruler of sacred Memphis, and Ariomardus who bears the sway over ancient Thebes, and the dwellers in the marshes¹, the skilful rowers of ships, and who are in numbers numberless. And a crowd of luxurious Lydians² follow, who occupy throughout the wide continent the seats of their tribes, whom Mithragathes and Arcteus the brave, their princely leaders, and Sardis that shines with gold³, send forth mounted on many a chariot, in ranks of double and triple yokes, a spectacle terrific to behold. And they who dwell by the sacred⁴ Tmolus are fixed in their purpose to impose on Greece the yoke of slavery, Mardon and Tharybis, anvils of the spear, and the Mysians armed with the javelin; and Babylon the city of gold sends forth in one vast crowd her mingled tribes, both the mariners that

(1) “ *Paludibus profecti, que insulâ Chemmide notantur, atque in Sebennyticam Bolbitinum, falsumque Nili ostium, defluunt.*”—MÜLLER.

(2) The luxury and effeminacy of the Lydians became proverbial ; and though in early times they were a warlike people, we may learn from Herodotus (I. 94.) how greatly they had degenerated.

(3) Sardis obtained its reputation for wealth from the famous treasures of Gyges and Croesus, its early kings. Schütz, in his usual trifling way, supposes the epithet *πολυχρυσος* to be used in reference to the particles of gold washed down from Tmolus by the river Pactolus, which flowed through the streets of the town.

(4) Tmolus is probably thus designated from having been honoured by the birth of Bacchus, when he was released from his second gestation in the thigh of Jupiter.

embark in her ships, and warriors proud of the strength with which they draw the bow. And the bands that bear the sword follow from the whole of Asia under the dread command of the king. Such a flower of her sons hath departed from the realm of Persia, for whom all the land of Asia that reared them laments in the excess of regret; and parents and wives, counting each day, tremble at the lengthening time. Already indeed the royal army, bearing destruction to cities, hath passed over to the opposite adjoining shores, having crossed by the raft with its fastenings of cables the Straits of Helle¹ the daughter of Athamas, after having placed a way² compacted by many a nail as a yoke on the neck of the sea. And the impetuous Ruler of populous Asia leads in two divisions, against every land, his more than mortal bands, trusting to the marshals of his infantry, and by sea to his firm and valiant captains; himself the peer of Gods, a hero whose lineage is derived from the seed of the golden shower³. But flashing from his eyes the dark glare of the bloody dragon, with many a warrior and many a mariner, and urging on the Syrian chariot, he leads his martial bands that subdue with the bow against men that are famed for the spear. And no one notwithstanding this mighty tide of men is of sufficient strength to exclude by firm bulwarks the irresistible billows of the sea⁴: for the army of the Persians may not be encountered, and valiant is all the

(1) The Hellespont derived its name from Helle, the daughter of Athamas king of Thebes, who, flying from the cruelties of her step-mother Ino, fell from the golden ram which Neptune had given her to assist her escape, and was drowned in the sea.

(2) — “Fama canit tumidum super aquora Xerxem
Construxisse vias, multum cum pontibus ausus,
Europamque Asiae, Sestonque admovit Abydo:
Incessitque fretum rapidi super Hellesponti
Non Eurum Zephyrumque timens.” — *Lucan. II. 672.*

(3) The Persians claimed their descent and name from Perseus, the son of Danaë. See Herod. VII. 61.

(4) “Fluctum enim totius Barbariae ferre urbs una non poterat.” — *Cic. ad Attic. vii. 4.*

people¹. But what mortal man shall escape the treacherous deceit of Heaven²? who shall surmount it by the elastic step of an easy bound? for courting him at first, as if with friendly intent, it decoys its victim into the thickest of the toils, whence it is impossible for man to escape by flight. For a fate from Heaven established of old and enjoined on the Persians to pursue such wars as lay waste towers, and the tumults in which the steed rejoices, and the destruction of cities. But they have taught themselves to look on the marine fields of the wide sea when tossed into foam by the gusts of the wind, trusting to cables of slender fabric, and to machines for transporting a people³. Therefore⁴ my bosom, wrapt in gloom, is harrowed with fear, alas! on account of this Persian army, lest the State shall learn that the mighty city of Susa is made desolate of her sons, and the walls of Cissia; (the crowd of women shall utter in responsive strain, alas! giving voice to this word;) and lest rending shall fall on the robes of fine linen. For all the people, either urging the steed or marching over the plains, have departed, like a swarm of bees, along with the leader of the host, having passed the promontory of the sea common to either continent and united by the bridge. But the nuptial couches are filled with tears through regret of absent husbands; and each of the Persian dames, a prey to excessive grief on account

(1) The Persians, as far as we have any accounts of them, appear to have been distinguished, in their earlier history, by great courage as well as success in arms.

(2) Stanley considers this passage to refer to the vision which appeared to Xerxes in his sleep and encouraged him to undertake the expedition against Greece; but it is more consonant to the spirit of the author to give a general interpretation to the reflections of the Chorus.

(3) The Chorus are speaking indignantly of the innovations on “the wisdom of their ancestors;” and we have therefore translated their words as if they had been used ironically, and not, according to Butler, as merely “an elegant periphrasis for ships.”

(4) “ *Tauta* refer ad superiora δολέμητων ἀπάτων θεοῦ, et quæ sequuntur. Cùm diù fuerimus felices, rerum vicissitudinem metuo, et τὴν σαύρουσαν μοῖραν reformido.”—PAUW.

of anxious longing for her beloved lord, having sent away the bold and warlike partner of her bed, is left in lonely misery. But come, ye Persians! having taken our seats beneath this ancient roof¹, let us employ prudent and well-pondered counsel, (for the occasion for it is come,) how haply fares Xerxes, the royal offspring of Darius, being of our own race by his hereditary name², and whether the shaft from the bow-string hath prevailed, or the strength of the pointed lance hath triumphed in the fray. But cease; for here comes the mother of the king, and my queen, a light equal to the eyes of the Gods: I fall before her; and fitting it is that all should address her with the words of salutation—O Queen, who art unrivalled amid the shapely dames of Persia! hail thou aged mother of Xerxes and consort of Darius! Thou didst share the bed of the God of the Persians; and art too the mother of a God, unless its former fortune hath now forsaken our army.

ATOSSA.

For this reason I come, having left the gold-decked palace, and the common chamber where Darius and I reposèd: and anxious care distracts my soul; but I will relate to you a tale, being besides, my friends, of my own suggestion, by no means without fear³ lest our great

(1) “The scene of this tragedy is at Susa, before the ancient structure appropriated to the Great Council of State, and near the tomb of Darius.”—POTTER.

(2) “Sensus rectè explicat Scholiastes: δ καὶ πατέρα συγγενῆς ήμιν, τοῦτ' ἔστιν, δ ἐκ προγόνων θαύματος, causam enim affert Chorus, cur de Xerxe sollicitus sit, quod ex ipsorum gente et patre rege sit natus, eaque tanquam epexegesis vocabulo Δαρειογενῆς apponitur.”—WELLAUER.

(3) “Nullus dubito quin sola præpositio διὸ sit subaudienda. Ἀπ' ἡμαυτῆς οὐσια διδεῖμαντος. Sed scopum loci vix satis assecuti sunt interpres. Metuere se ait regina, ne vetus illa felicitas exercitum deseruerit, eaque de causâ advenisse, ut μῦθον, somnium suum narret, quamvis et ipsa per se absque illo somnio, hardquaquam sit timoris expers, &c. Nunc locum habes planè expeditum.”—BUTLER.

We scarcely agree with the concluding sentence; for though we have adopted the same interpretation, we cannot help thinking it a little forced. The whole speech labours under a considerable degree of obscurity, and, even where the meaning may be discovered, is harsh and devoid of elegance.

wealth, having swept too rapidly along, should overturn with its foot the prosperity which Darius raised on high, not without the aid of some God. Therefore there is in my breast a double unutterable care, lest no one hold in honour a store of wealth unprotected by men, nor that light shines to those who are devoid of riches so far as their strength would justify. For our wealth at least is not to be despised, but I have fear concerning the eye of these possessions: for I deem the presence of its master the eye of the house. Therefore, since these things are so, be my counsellors in this case, ye aged pledges of Persia's faith; for all good counsels for me reside in you.

CHORUS.—Be well assured of this, O Queen of this land! that you should not twice command either word to be spoken or deed to be done where our power was able to lead the way to completion¹: for you call on us who bear you friendly feeling to be your counsellors in these difficulties.

ATOSSA.—I have been ever haunted, indeed, with many visions by night from the time that my son, having prepared his forces, departed with intent to devastate the land of the Ionians. But I have never yet beheld any vision so distinct as during last night; and I will describe it to you. Two women in fair attire, the one clad in Persian robes and the other again in Doric, appeared to rise before my view, by far the most graceful in stature of all living of their sex, and faultless in beauty, and sisters of the same race. And they dwelt in their native countries, the one having obtained by lot the Grecian, and the other the Barbaric²

(1) It is strange that Blomfield should have been puzzled with this passage, in which, though the expressions are circumlocutory, the meaning is obvious. Wellauer translates it entirely to our satisfaction: “*omnia, in quibus vis se mihi ducem præbere vult.*”

(2) The learned Germanus Valens Guellius has thus commented on this expression: “Desierat etiam apud Barbaros ipsa vox βάρβαρος invidiosa haberi: nimurum in Persis Æschyli passim Persæ Persarumque regina de suâ regione loquentes βάρβαρον et βάρβαρον στρατὸν et βάρβαρον νῆas usurpant. This is a complete begging of the question; and its absurdity

land. These two, as it seemed to my eyes, created some quarrel with each other; but my son, having perceived it, restrained them, and soothed them, and yokes them beneath his chariot, and places collars on their necks. And the one, when thus equipped, carried her head proudly, and kept her mouth obedient to the rein; but the other kept plunging, and tears in pieces with her hands the harness of the chariot, and hurries it away by force unchecked by the curb, and breaks asunder the middle of the yoke. And my son falls, and his father Darius stands by expressing pity for his misfortune; but when Xerxes sees him, he rends the robes around his person. And such appearances, indeed, I affirm that I beheld during the night. But when I arose, and touched with my hands the fair flow of the fount, I took my stand beside the altar¹, with the incense in my hand, wishing to offer the thick libation to the Gods the averters of ill, to whom these rites are due. But I behold an eagle flying towards the altar of Phœbus; and I stood speechless, my friends, through terror; and afterwards I spy a hawk pursuing on its track in rapid flight, and tearing the head of the eagle with its talons: but he did nothing else than, cowering, lend his body to the wound. These sights are terrible to me at least to behold, and to you to hear of: for ye well know, that my son, if blessed with success, would become a man of marvellous fame; but if his fortunes be bad, he is not accountable to the State; and if but preserved², he is still equally the monarch of these realms.

surdity is so manifest, that it is strange that Stanley should have quoted the remark with approbation, and stranger still that Butler should have followed him with the decisive note of Pauw before his eyes. This able critic sums up the matter in a very few words: “Βάρβαρος aptum est in ore *Æschylus*, sed ineptum in ore *Atosse*, id apertum: sic tamen imprudens *Æschylus* etiam alibi.”

(1) “Hæc sunt ab Herodoto prorsus aliena, qui de Persarum sacris ritibus verba faciens, I. 132. Οὐτε, inquit, βωμούς ποιεῦται, οὐτε πῦρ ἀνακαλοῦσι, μέλλοντες θύειν.”—STANLEY.

(2) This agrees with the doctrine of Aristotle, that φυλακή, or the safety of the monarch's person, is the object of tyranny.

CHORUS.—We do not wish, O mother, either too much to alarm you by our words, or to restore your confidence ; but approaching the Gods as a suppliant, implore them, if you have seen any thing disastrous, to grant that it may be averted, but that what is favourable may be brought to pass, to you and to your children, to the city and to all your friends. In the next place, it is your duty to pour forth libations to Earth and to the dead ; and in soothing manner make these requests to your husband Darius, whom you say that you saw in the night, that he send what is good for you and your son from beneath the earth to light, and that the contrary of what is good¹, being chained beneath the earth, lie buried in darkness. These things, on the suggestion of my mind², I have with kind feeling recommended to you ; and we judge concerning these circumstances that the Gods will in every respect make their issue favourable.

ATOSSA.—But you indeed, the first judge of these dreams, have, with friendly disposition at least, sanctioned this interpretation for my son and my house. May what is good then come to pass ! But when I have entered the palace, I will perform all these things, as you have prescribed, to the Gods and to the kindred shades beneath the earth. But I wish, O my friends ! fully to learn this, in what part of the world they say that Athens is situated³.

(1) The Chorus make use of this circumlocution in order to avoid a word of evil omen.

(2) “*Θηρόμαντις dicitur is qui insita mentis prudentia usus, non divino numine afflatus, futura prædicti.*”—SCHÜTZ.

(3) Nothing can be more absurd, than that Atossa for the first time should be making such inquiries ; and the clap-trap purpose for which they were introduced has justly excited the censures of Pauw : “*Hæc frigent, et Æschylus absque ullo judicio ingessit, ut Athenas suas celebraret. An nunc demum hæc sciscitabatur regina ? An de Athenis nihil anteà inaudiverat ? an animus perterritus, et ad deorum averruncorum aras applicitus, hæcce nunc poterat volvere ? Vident omnes verum esse quod, dico : sed ineptuli erant omnes Athenienses, ubi de Athenis suis aliquid crocitare poterant. Hoc Æschylum excusat, si communis error excusare possit.*”

CHORUS.—Far in the west, where the royal sun goes down.

ATOSSA.—But did my son indeed desire to take this city?

CHORUS.—Yes; for all Greece would thus have become subject to the king.

ATOSSA.—Is there at their command any so great a number of men in their armies?

CHORUS.—Even such an army as hath already been the cause of many calamities to the Medes.

ATOSSA.—And what other resources in addition to these? Have they a sufficient store of wealth at home?

CHORUS.—A certain fountain of silver belongs to them, the treasure of the earth¹.

ATOSSA.—Whether does the arrow of the bent bow display itself in their hands?

CHORUS.—By no means: theirs is the close-thrusting spear, and panoply protected by the shield.

ATOSSA.—But what leader commands, and sways as a master, the host?

CHORUS.—They are not called the slaves nor vassals of any mortal man.

ATOSSA.—How then can they abide the attack of invading foemen?

CHORUS.—Even so as to have destroyed the vast and goodly army of Darius.

ATOSSA.—You say what is frightful to the thoughts of the parents of their invaders.

CHORUS.—But, as it appears to me, you shall quickly know the whole accurate account; for the running of this man is obviously, to our perception, that of a Persian; and he clearly bears the news of some event, either prosperous or disastrous to hear.

MESSENGER.

O ye cities of all the land of Asia! O ye realms of Persia, and vast haven² of wealth! how, by one blow, hath your

(1) The silver mines at Laureum.

(2) “*Λαυρός* est *portus, statio.* Et fortè regiam urbem intelligit, ubi maximi divitiarum thesauri congesti erant; vel latius Persici regni opulentiam.”—BUTLER.

high happiness been laid low, and the flower of the Persians fallen and perished ! Ah me ! it is a misery to be the first messenger of ill : but still it is necessary to disclose all their calamities to the Persians, for the whole army of Barbarians hath perished.

CHORUS.—Alas ! alas ! for these sad, sad, wretched, and unwonted evils ! Give vent to your tears, O Persians ! hearing this tale of sorrow.

MESSENGER.—You may, since at least every thing there has gone to ruin ; and I, for one, beyond my hopes *see* the light of return.

CHORUS.—This life, indeed, appears to have been protracted too long to our aged years, to hear of this unexpected calamity.

MESSENGER.—And I indeed, being present, and not hearing the account from others, can tell what evils were dealt out on the Persians.

CHORUS.—Alas ! it was all in vain that the mingled weapons of every nation went forth from the land of Asia against a hostile land, the shores of Greece.

MESSENGER.—The strand of Salamis, and all the adjacent regions, are covered with the dead bodies of those who wretchedly perished.

CHORUS.—Alas ! you tell of the bodies of our friends, tossed by the sea and steeped in its wave¹, being borne in death along the double-shifting surface of the tide².

MESSENGER.—For the bow was of no avail ; and all the host hath perished, overpowered by the attacks of the ships.

CHORUS.—Shriek forth the sad cry of bitter woe for the wretched Persians ! since they have managed every thing with fatal ruin ; alas ! alas ! our army being destroyed.

(1) “ *Post ταλυθαφῆ non intelligendum sanguine, ut Schol. voluit, sed undis.* ”—SCHÜTZ.

(2) Blomfield translates it, “ *on the ebbing and flowing surface of the sea* ;” which is undoubtedly the correct, though not quite the literal meaning. Stanley renders the same words, “ *duplicibus tabulis navium confractarum* ;” and Schütz has been so obliging as to keep him in countenance in this absurdity.

MESSENGER.—O name of Salamis, most hateful to hear !
Alas ! how I groan when I think upon Athens !

CHORUS.—Yes, Athens is hateful to her foes ; we have cause to remember how, in our fruitless attempts, they made many of the Persian women childless and widowed.

ATOSSA.—I, wretched, have long since been struck dumb and stupefied by these ills : for this calamity is so excessive, that one may neither tell nor inquire into our losses. But still it is necessary that mortals should bear with misfortunes, when the Gods inflict them. Speak therefore, and disclose all our sufferings—yourself composed, however distressed at this affliction. Who is not dead ? And whom of the leaders of the people shall we lament, who, appointed to bear the ensigns of command, left at his death his bands without their chief¹ ?

MESSENGER.—Xerxes himself, indeed, both lives, and beholds the light.

ATOSSA.—You have declared, indeed, a great light to my house, and the brightness of day after the deep gloom of night.

MESSENGER.—But Artembaras, the leader of ten thousand horse, is dashed against the rugged shores of the Silenians ; and Dadaces, the commander of a thousand, struck by the spear, leapt with light bound from the ship ; and Tenagon, the true-born and gallant chief of the Bactrians, has now his dwelling in the sea-beat island of Ajax. Lilæus, and Arsames, and Argestes the Third, being also overpowered beside the island abounding in doves²,

(1) Atossa, though anxious for her son, fears to inquire directly respecting his fate.

(2) “ Salaminem insulam Veneris in tutelâ fuisse ex Homero discimus, Hymn. IX. 4. ; undè probabile est columbas summâ curâ incolas enutrisisse, atque insulam iis abundâsse : Veneri enim sacra hæc avia.”—STANLEY. Butler has combatted this notion at some length, and has shewn pretty clearly that the Salamis mentioned by Homer must have been the city of that name in the island of Cyprus. He then adds, in explanation of the epithet : “ Asperam et saxosam fuisse insulam illam, arboribus consitam, ideoque columbarum nidis satis idoneam, in confessu est.”

butted¹ its rocky shores ; and Arcteus who dwelt near the fountains of Egyptian Nile, Adeues, Pheresseues the Third, and Pharnuchus, all fell from the same ship. Matallus of Chrysa, the leader of numbers, having fallen, the chief in command over thrice ten thousand black horse, bedewed in the sea the tawny hair of his thick and shaggy beard, changing its colour for the purple dye ; and Arabus the Magian, and Artames the Bactrian, transferring his abode to a rugged land, there perished. Amestris, and Amphistreus who wielded an impetuous spear, and Ariomardus the brave * * * * * causing sorrow to Sardis, and Sesames the Mysian ; and Tharybis the leader of five times fifty ships, a Lyrnæan by birth and a warrior of beauteous form, lies in wretched death, the victim of no happy fortune : and Syennesis², peerless in valour, the prince of the Cilicians, having with his single arm caused the greatest distress to the enemy, in glory expired. Of the fate of such chiefs I have now made mention ; but I tell but a few of the many evils that are present.

ATOSSA.—Alas ! alas ! I hear these by far the greatest of ills, bringing disgrace to the Persians, and awakening shrill lamentations ! But tell me this, returning to your tale, how great was the number of the Grecian fleet, so that they dared to encounter the Persian host with the assault of the beaks of the ships ?

MESSENGER.—Be well assured, indeed, that in point of numbers the Barbarian fleet had the advantage ; for to the Greeks the whole number of their ships was but three hundred, and besides these there were ten of superior excellence ; but to Xerxes (for I know it) the number of

(1) “ *Cornibus petierunt terram duram : capitibus acti sunt in terram et saxa.* Comicum hoc, ut et πολεῖ precedens, alterumque πῆδημα καῦφον ἐκ νεῶς ἀφῆλατο. Τὸ πρέπον non servat tragicus : nam nuntius lugens hūc loquitur : pueri sentiunt, et revera nihil ridiculum magis.”—PAUW. The absurd passage which immediately follows, about the beard of Matallus, may justly come in for a share of this censure.

(2) The common appellation of the Princes of Cilicia, used in like manner with the Labynetus of Babylon and the Pharaoh of Egypt.

those which he led was in truth a thousand, while those which surpassed in speed were two hundred and seven. Such is the account of them. Do we seem to you to have been inferior in point of numbers in this battle? We were not; but it was some God that thus destroyed the army, depressing the scales with no equipoise of fortune.

ATOSSA.—The Gods preserve the city of the Goddess Pallas¹! But is, then, the city of Athens still unsacked?

MESSENGER.—Yes; for whilst her sons survive, her bulwarks are secure².

ATOSSA.—But tell what was the beginning of the naval conflict. Who commenced the fight? the Greeks; or my son, elated by the number of his ships?

MESSENGER.—A fiend, or evil spirit, that from some quarter appeared, began, O Queen, the whole of our evils. For a Greek³, coming from the army of the Athenians, gave this information to your son Xerxes; That, when the clouds of dark night should descend, the Greeks would not remain, but, leaping on the benches of their ships, would in various directions seek to preserve their lives by secret flight. But he, the instant that he heard it, not being aware of the stratagem of the Greek⁴, nor that the Gods grudged his success, sets forth these commands to all the leaders of the fleet; That, when the sun should cease to illumine the earth with his rays, and darkness tenant the temple of the sky, they should draw up in three divisions the thick array of their ships, to guard the outlets and passes of the murmuring sea, and station others in a circle around the island of Ajax; since if the Greeks should

(1) “Atossa, quæ anteā de Athenis omnia ignorabat, ut vidimus suprà, hīc probe scit eas Palladi esse sacras. Quid aīs? haec bellè cohærent.”—PAUW.

(2) “Combusto oppido, non muris sed viris civitatem constare pulchre dicit.” MÜLLER. “Ανδρες γαρ πόλις, καὶ οὐ τείχη, οὐδὲ νῆσοι αὐθρῶν κενα. Thucyd. VII. 77.

(3) “Cui nomen Sicinus. Astutissimum hoc Themistoclis commentum memorat Herodotus, VIII. 76. et Diodorus Siculus, XI. p. 251.”—STANLEY.

(4) “Calliditas Graia, atque astus pollutior armis.”

Sil. Ital. xiv. 338.

escape from fatal destruction, having discovered some secret means of flight with their ships, it was announced to all that they should be deprived of their heads. Such commands he gave, moved by the impetuous violence of his mind; for he weened not of the future how it was ordained by the Gods. But they, not in disorder, but with minds obedient to command, both prepared their evening meal¹, and each mariner lashed his oar to the well-fitted oar-lock. And when the light of the sun had faded and night came on, each man lord² of the oar, and each who bore sway over arms, proceeded to his vessel; and band kept cheering band in the ships of war, and they sail as each was appointed; and through the whole night the commanders of the ships kept all their naval forces employed in sailing without intermission. And night advanced, and the army of the Greeks did not at all attempt to sail forth by stealth in any quarter. But when Day, drawn by white steeds, had extended her empire over all the world, gladdening mortal light with her beams, first indeed a loud strain from the Grecians bade hail in measured chaunt to Echo, and Echo at the same time flung back from the rocks of the island the inspiring note: and terror filled all the Barbarians, deceived in their expectations; for the Greeks did not then awake the hymn of the sacred pæan as for flight, but as hastening to the fight with gallant confidence of soul: and the trumpet, with its clangor, inflamed all their bands; and quickly, with the joint stroke of the dashing oar, they cleft the resounding surge. In a short time their whole numbers were dis-

(1) “Persæ semel tantum in die, idque ad coenæ tempus, cibum capessebant. Hinc facetum Megacreontis dictum, cuius meminunt Herodotus, VII. 120. Abderitas Deos postulare suasit ut dimidium futurorum malorum à se propulsaretur; nam de præteritis magnam se gratiam illis habere, quod rex Xerxes non bis quotidie cibum capere consuesset: Παρέχειν γάρ ἀν' Ἀβδηρίτροι, εἰ καὶ δριστον προείρητο δμοια τῷ δειπνῷ παρασκευάζειν, ή μὴ ὑπομένειν Εέρην ἐπίοντα, ή καταμείναντας, κακιστα πάντων ἀνθρώπων διατριβῆναι.”—STANLEY.

(2) Τὸ δὲ, ὃς δὲ Τήλεφος Εύρωτίου φησι, καίτας ἀνάσσειν, καὶ ἀνοβεῖ εἰς Μυσίαν, διπεπτές, ὅτι μείζον τὸ ἀνάσσειν ἡ κατ' ἀξίαν.—Arist. Rhet. III. 2.

tinctly seen. The right wing, skilfully formed, first led the way in order; and next came all the rest of the fleet after them, and we might at the same time hear them loudly shout: “O sons of the Greeks, on! and give freedom to the land of your fathers! give freedom to your children, your wives, the temples of your country’s Gods, and the tombs of your ancestors!—the struggle is now for all!” And, in truth, the clamour of the Persian tongue went forth from us in answer; and it was no longer the moment for delay; but ship immediately dashed against ship its brazen prow. A Grecian ship first began the attack¹; and it carries away the whole figure-head of a Phœnician ship; and against another some other captain steered his vessel. At first, indeed, the torrent of the Persian forces made head against the attack; but when their numerous ships were crowded together in the Straits, and no aid could be afforded to one another, they themselves both shattered all the banks of their oars by the crash of their own brazen beaks, and the Grecian ships with no unskilful tactics bore down upon them, encompassed in a circle: and the hulls of the ships were capsized, and the sea could no longer be discerned², being covered with the wrecks of the ships and the slaughtered bodies of men; and the shores and projecting rocks were crowded with our dead; and every ship rowed away in disorderly flight, as many as belonged to the armament of the Barbarians. But the Greeks kept striking and hacking them, as men would tunnies or some draught of fishes, with the fragments of the oars and the splinters of the wrecks³: and at the same time, lamentation filled with loud

(1) The claim to this honour was disputed by the *Æginetæ* and the Athenians. Æschylus obviously favours the pretensions of his countrymen; for he represents the attack to have been made on a ship of the Phœnicians, against whom, as we know from Herodotus, the Athenians were stationed in the fight.

(2) “*Vera constructio est, θάλασσα οὕκει τὸν ὄστρε των θεῶν ἐκείνην, mare non amplius existebat, quod ad visum attinet, vel adeo ut quisquam id posset videre.*”—HEATH.

(3) “*Quod autem dicit nuntius Græcos remorum fragmentis Persas*
hic

shrieks the wide sea, till the eye of dark night¹ broke off the combat. But I could not fully unfold to you the multitude of our evils, not even though I should describe them in order for ten days: for be well assured of this, that never in one day did so great a number of men perish.

ATOSSA.—Alas! alas! a mighty sea of evils hath burst over the Persians and all the race of Barbarians!

MESSENGER.—Be now well assured of this, that their calamities are not yet half told: such a fatal excess of suffering befell them, as even twice to counterbalance with its weight the evils you have heard.

ATOSSA.—But what misfortune could happen more distressing than this? Tell what calamity it was that you say again came on the host, verging to a heavier weight of sorrows.

MESSENGER.—Whoever of the Persians were in the prime of youthful vigour, and bravest of soul, and eminent for noble lineage, and ranked among the first in fidelity to the king, all these have foully perished by a most inglorious death.

ATOSSA.—O sad is my heart, ye friends, for this bitter loss! But by what fate do you say that they were destroyed?

MESSENGER.—There is a certain island² in view of the regions of Salamis, of small circumference and unsafe harbourage, frequented by the dance-loving Pan and overhanging the shore of the sea. Thither he sends this band, that when the enemy, having fallen overboard from their ships, might seek the island for safety, they might destroy

hic illuc nantes tanquam thynnos trucidasse, id vel hodiè moris est in Siculo mari, ut thynnos retibus inclusos remis ac fustibus feriendo interimant.”—BUTLER.

(1) “Corruptum hunc versum putat Blomf., quia neque noctis occlus possit ἀφαιρεῖσθαι τι dici, neque intelligi possit, quid post ἀφέλετο subaudiendum, quare hoc in ἀφίκετο mutari vult. Sed νυκτὸς δύμα est, noctis tenebra (v. Seidl. ad Eur. Iph. T. 110.) eæque pugnantibus et ejulantibus eripuerunt aspectum eorum, quæ fiebant.”—WELLAUER.

(2) Psyttaleia. See Herod. VIII. 95.

the forces of the Greeks, an easy prey, and rescue their friends from the channels of the sea; miscalculating the chances of the future. For when the God had given the triumph of the naval combat to the Greeks, having on the same day secured their bodies with goodly brazen armour, they leaped from their ships, and encompassed all the island around, so that the Persians were at a loss whither they should turn for escape; for dreadfully were they wounded by stones from the hand, and arrows from the bow-string falling on them destroyed them. At length their enemies, rushing on with one impulse, wound and hew in pieces the limbs of these wretched men, until they had utterly destroyed the life of all. But Xerxes loudly shrieked, seeing this excess of calamity¹; for he occupied a seat that commanded a full view of all the army, on a lofty hill² near the depths of the sea. But he rends his robes, and wildly howls; and having immediately issued the command to the land forces, he sends them on in disorderly flight. Such a calamity you have to lament, in addition to the former.

ATOSA.—O hateful demon! how hast thou deceived the Persians in their expectations! But my son hath reaped a bitter vengeance from illustrious Athens; and the Barbarians have not sufficed whom Marathon formerly destroyed³, for whose loss my son seeking to exact retribution has drawn on himself such a multitude of calamities. But do you tell me where you have left the ships that escaped destruction: do you know, so as to signify it clearly?

MESSENGER.—The leaders I know, of the ships that were left, commenced a precipitate and disorderly flight before

(1) We quote as a specimen of pure and unadulterated nonsense the following note of Schütz: “*Kakāv báθos, abyssum malorum, metaphora cum aliis idonea, tum huic potissimum loco apta, quid Xerxes ex alto prælium spectabat.*” This is itself an example of the true *báthos*, the genuine art of sinking in criticism.

(2) Xerxes viewed the battle of Salamis from the mountain *Ægialus*, on the opposite shore.

(3) “*Hinc proverbium, Merā την Μαραθόνα μάχην, post Marathonem prælium, ubi quis post unam calamitatem in aliam rursus incidit.*”—STANLEY.

the wind. But the rest of the army partly perished in the land of the Boeotians—some indeed, in the agonies of thirst, beside the sparkling waters of the fount, and some exhausted by want of breath—and partly we pass to the territories of the Phocians and the Doric land, and the Melian Gulf, where Sperchius waters the plain with his bounteous stream; and thence the soil of the Achaian¹ country, and the city of the Thessalians, received us, straitened for food. There a great many died from thirst and hunger; for both these hardships assailed us. But we proceeded on, to the territory of the Magnesians, and the regions of Macedonia, to the river Axius, the marshy reeds of Lake Bolbe, the mountain of Pangæus, and the Thracian land. But on this night the God caused an unseasonable² frost, and congeals all the waters of the sacred Strymon. Then he who formerly disbelieved the existence of Gods implored them in prayer, paying worship to earth and heaven³. But after the army ceased from their many entreaties to the Gods, they proceed to pass over the ice of the frozen stream; and each of us, indeed, who set forward before the rays of the God were disseminated, is preserved. For the bright orb of the sun, blazing with all its beams, shot them into the middle of the stream, melting the ice with their heat: but the men sunk one above another, and happy was he who first expired. But as many as survived and obtained safety, after passing through Thrace with difficulty and great toil, come, but a few in number, escaping to the land of their homes; so that the city of the Persians may well groan, longing in vain for the dearest youth of the land. These tidings are true; but I omit the mention of many calamities, which the God hath violently inflicted on the Persians.

CHORUS.—O irresistible demon! how very heavily hast thou leaped with thy feet on all the Persian race!

(1) The Phthiotic Achaia.

(2) The battle of Salamis was fought on the 20th of September.

(3) See the quaint quotation from Bishop Andrews, in the Appendix to Blomfield's Notes, p. 205.

ATOSSA.—Alas ! how I grieve for the destruction of the army ! O manifest vision of the dreams of night, how too truly you revealed to me these evils ! And you very imperfectly interpreted their meaning. But still, since your response has given me authority to act in this way, I wish indeed in the first place to pray to the Gods, and next I will come have taken from my house the clotted libations, offerings to Earth and the dead. I know, indeed, that I shall do so for what is past relief, but I do it with the view that better fortune may accrue to us for the future. But it is your duty, in these circumstances, to confer with the faithful in faithful counsel; and console my son, if he should come hither before me, and conduct him to the palace, lest calamity should be added to our present calamities¹.

CHORUS.—O sovereign Jove, now indeed having destroyed the army of the highly-vaunting and numerous Persians, thou hast shrouded in the gloom of sorrow the cities of Susa and Ecbatana ! And many maids, rending their veils with tender hands, drench their bosoms with showers of tears, feeling their share of the grief. But the Persian dames, in excess of sorrow, longing to behold their late-wedded husbands, and the dalliance of the silken-covered couch, the delight of wanton youth, abandoning themselves to misery, lament with most insatiable wail. And I too, with good reason, feel heavy woe for the fate of the dead. Now, indeed, all the land of Asia, *reft* of its children, laments : for Xerxes led, O Gods ! and Xerxes destroyed them, alas ! and Xerxes pursued all his plans fatally, owing to the barks of the ocean. Why was not Darius, unerring leader of the bow, then at the head of his people, the prince so dear to Susa ? The ships, all winged alike, and coloured with azure on their prows, bore away both the land and sea forces, O Gods ! and the ships destroyed them, alas ! the ships with the deadly assaults of

(1) “Ne scil. sibi ipse Xerxes vitæ pertæsus, violentas manus inferat.”
—SCHÜTZ.

of their beaks. And the king himself has with difficulty escaped, as we hear, through the hands of the Ionians, and along the paths of the wintry Thracian plains. But they who perished in our first disaster, alas ! being left by necessity, are dashed amid the waves, around the Cythrean shores. Groan, and gnash the teeth, and loudly raise to heaven the cry of sorrow, alas ! and vent the notes of dismal howling, the exclamations of the wretched. But dreadfully mangled by the sea, alas ! they are devoured, O woe and alas ! by the silent offspring of the stainless deep. And each house bewails the lord it has lost ; and the aged parents bereft of their children, lamenting these heaven-sent calamities, hear now the whole tale of sorrow. But they who dwell through the land of Asia will not in future long bear the Persian rule, nor pay tribute at the compulsion of a master, nor, falling down to earth, submit to be ruled : for the strength of the monarchy hath utterly perished ; nor is the tongue of mortals any longer under restraint, for the people hath been licensed to speak freely, since the yoke of our might hath been broken. And the sea-girt island of Ajax, stained as to its fields with blood, contains all that now remains of the Persians.

ATOSSA.—Whosoever, my friends, happens to be well-acquainted with misfortunes, knows that when a sea of troubles flows in upon mortals, one is wont to fear every thing : but when fortune glides smoothly, he trusts that the same influence will ever guide favourably the chances of his life. For to me already all things, indeed, are full of fear, and in my eyes the omens of heaven appear adverse, and there rings in my ears no soothing strain ; so great is the stupefaction of misery that dismayeth my soul. I have therefore again returned from the palace both without my chariot and former state, bearing to the father of my son those conciliatory libations that have a charm to soothe the dead¹—both the white stream of sweet milk from the pure

(1) “Hos ritus non ex more Persarum, sed Græcorum, describit.
‘Αμάρτημα, sed quo nihil poëtis, Homerum non excipio, frequentius.”—
STANLEY.

stores of the cow, and the liquid that the bee distils from the flower, the transparent honey, with libations of water from the virgin fount, and this beverage pure from its wild mother the sparkling juice of the ancient vine ; and here is the fragrant fruit of the pale-green olive that ever teems through its life with leaves¹, and garlands of flowers that drew their birth from the bosom of the fruitful earth. But, O my friends ! do ye awake a propitious strain over these libations to the dead, and summon² to light the divine Darius, whilst I pour on the thirsty earth these offerings in honour of the Infernal Gods.

CHORUS.—O royal dame, revered by the Persians, do you send the libations beneath the chambers of the earth, and we in our strains will implore the conductors of the dead beneath the earth to be propitious. But, O ye sacred Powers of Hades, Earth and Hermes, and the monarch of the shades, send from below his soul to light¹, for if he know any further affliction of misfortunes, he alone of mortals can tell their issue. Does then that blessed and godlike king hear me, as I send forth in clear barbaric tone the doleful and dismal sounds of every varied lamentation ? With the cry of bitter sorrow I will pierce the tomb. In the realms below hears he my voice ? But do you, O Earth, and other conductors of the dead, accord to my prayers that the illustrious shade may arise from your mansions, the God of the Persians, in Susa born ; and restore to light him, whose equal the Persian earth hath never yet enshrouded ! O surely he was dear to us in life ! and dear is his tomb, for dear were the manners of him that it contains. But do thou, O Pluto, Pluto, permit Darius to return, Darius all kingly as he was ! For never did he destroy his people by the fatal calamities of war, and he was called by the Persians a God in counsel ; and a God in counsel he was, since he ever directed our armies

(1) “Baccaque cum ramis semper frondentis olivæ.”
Ovid, Met. VIII. 295.

(2) The art of magical incantation was probably derived by the Persians from the conquered Chaldeans.

aright. O king! our ancient king! hasten, come, appear on the highest summit of the sepulchral mound, raising the saffron sandal of thy foot, and giving to light the crest of thy royal tiara! Passing from the shades, O blameless Darius, arise to rejoice us! Appear, O monarch! that you may hear the unwonted and new calamities of our monarch. For a certain Stygian gloom hovers over us; for our youth have fallen to rise no more. Passing from the shades, O blameless Darius, arise to rejoice us! Alas, and alas! O thou that diedst to the deep grief of thy friends! O Potentate, O Potentate! why should these accumulated ills have their sphere of action throughout all this thy land? The ships with their triple banks of oars have utterly perished, the ships whose last fight now is fought.

GHOST OF DARIUS.

O faithful among the faithful, and cotemporaries of my youth, ye aged Persians! with what affliction is the city distressed? Prostrate on the plain, it groans, and is beaten and lacerated in the violence of its grief. But seeing here my consort beside the tomb, I am alarmed; (but I have received the conciliatory libations¹;) and you, too, standing near the sepulchre, and loudly raising the dirges that evoke the dead, sadly summon me to appear. But it is not easy to get out, both for other reasons and because the Gods below the earth are better at holding fast than letting go². Yet I, from being of power³ among them, am here. But make haste, that I may not be blamed for delay. What is the new calamity that has fallen heavily on the Persians?

(1) We cannot help thinking, with Schütz, that the reading here ought to be *πρευμενής*.

(2) — “ facilis descensus Averni:

Noctes atque dies patet atri janua Ditis;
Sed revocare gradum, supérasque evadere ad auras,
Hoc opus, hic labor est.” — *Virg. Æn. VI. 126.*

(3) “ Veterum opinio erat reges qui virtute et factis excelluerant, apud inferos magnâ in dignitate esse, imperiumque in mortuorum simula-
chra seu animas exercere.” — BRUNCK.

CHORUS.—I fear, indeed, to look on you, and I fear to speak to you, on account of my ancient awe of your presence.

DARIUS.—But since I have come from below in compliance with your mournful request, do not in any tedious tale, but in a few words, declare and relate all, laying aside your awe of me.

CHORUS.—I fear, indeed, to grant what you ask; and I fear to speak in your presence, telling what is harsh for friends to hear.

DARIUS.—But since this ancient fear obstructs your thoughts, do you, O aged partner of my bed, dame of a noble lineage! having ceased from these tears and lamentations, declare to me some clear intelligence. Human calamities may in truth be expected to befall men; for many evils arise to mortals from the sea, and many from the land, if their more lengthened life shall extend to a protracted date.

ATOSSA.—O thou, who didst transcend in the prosperity of thy fortunes the happy estate of all mortals, and who in envied glory, whilst thou didst behold the rays of the sun, led, like a God, a life of unbroken felicity among the Persians! how enviable do I now account thee, having died before thou sawest our profound calamities⁽¹⁾! For, O Darius! thou shalt quickly hear the whole tale: in one word, the fortunes of the Persians are ruined for ever!

DARIUS.—In what way? Has the fury of the pestilence, or has sedition, visited the State?

ATOSSA.—By no means; but our whole army has been utterly destroyed at Athens.

DARIUS.—But tell me which of my sons led the forces thither.

ATOSSA.—The impetuous Xerxes, having drained of its population the whole extent of the continent.

DARIUS.—Was it with land or naval powers that the wretched man made this insane attempt?

(1) “Felix morte tuâ, neque in hunc servata dolorem.”
Virg. *Aen.* XI. 158.

ATOSSA.—With both. Two armaments displayed their fronts, beneath two different leaders.

DARIUS.—But how could so great a land force be able to cross the seas?

ATOSSA.—He formed, by the aid of machines, a bridge across the Straits of Helle, so as to have the means of crossing.

DARIUS.—And did he effect this, so as to confine the mighty waters of the Bosphorus?

ATOSSA.—Even so; but some demon abetted his intention.

DARIUS.—Alas! some mighty demon hath possessed him, so that his mind was infatuated.

ATOSSA.—We may therefore see what a fatal issue he hath brought to pass.

DARIUS.—And what are the sufferings they have undergone, over which you thus lament?

ATOSSA.—The defeat of the naval forces led to the destruction of the land army.

DARIUS.—But has all the people been thus entirely destroyed by the spear?

ATOSSA.—So that, in consequence, the city of Susa groans for the loss of her sons.

DARIUS.—Alas, ye Gods, for the vain succour and defence of the army!

ATOSSA.—And the people of the Bactrians has perished in total destruction, nor is there even an old man left.

DARIUS.—O unhappy man! what a host of youthful allies he has destroyed!

ATOSSA.—And they say that Xerxes abandoned and deserted, with only a few—

DARIUS.—How, and where died? Is there any safety?

ATOSSA.—Gladly hastens to the bridge that unites the two continents.

DARIUS.—And has gained this continent in safety? Is this true?

ATOSSA.—Yes. The clear account of his escape cannot be disputed: in it, at least, there is no doubt.

DARIUS.—Alas ! a speedy accomplishment of the oracles has come ; and Jove has heavily inflicted on my son the issue of his predicted decrees. But I trusted that the Gods would not bring them to pass till after a long time. But when any one of his own accord hastens to ruin, the God also joins in assisting him. A fountain of evils now appears to have been discovered for all my friends. But my son, through his ignorance and youthful audacity, has been the instrument of all this ill, who hoped to restrain with fetters¹, like a slave, the sacred Hellespont, the tides of the Bosphorus, streams of Ocean's God, and changed the passage² over the strait, and, placing on it chains forged by the hammer, completed a wide path for his numerous bands, being a mortal ; but he deemed, in his infatuation, that he should obtain the victory over Neptune and all the Gods³. Has not therefore some disease of the mind possessed my son ? I fear lest the vast stores of wealth which I laboured to acquire shall now become to men the prey of the first to seize them.

ATOSSA.—The impetuous Xerxes receives these impressions from holding intercourse with false counsellors⁴ ; for they tell him that you indeed acquired great riches for your children with the spear, but that he, from lack of valour, only wields the spear within his palace walls, and contributes nothing to the increase of the wealth that his

(1) “*Δεσμόματα* non interpretor de vinculis, quæ,rupto priore ponte, Xerxes furibundus in Hellespontum, et tanquam castigandi causâ demitti jussit ; additis etiam, ut erat hominis insania, c c c. verberibus, (Herodot. VII. 35.) nam de istâ filii petulantâ nihil Darius ipse audiverat, verum universè de pontis Hellesponto injecti retinaculis.” SCHÜTZ.—To these remarks, which are undoubtedly true, Blomfield has still more acutely added, that this idle story about Xerxes very probably arose from the perversion of some such expressions as are here made use of by the poet.

(2) Darius seems to forget that he once made a bridge of this very same kind himself.

(3) Such as were Mardonius and Onomacritus.

(4) *Naturam trajectus mulavit.* Audacter, sed spiritu verè Æschyleo interpres Dutheilus, *Il a dénaturé les eaux.*”—BUTLER.

father left. Hearing often such reproaches from base men, he has determined on this journey and expedition against Greece.

DARIUS.—Therefore by them has a deed been wrought of heaviest affliction, and never to be forgotten; such as has not yet made desolate by its visitation this city of Susa, from the time at least that sovereign Jove bestowed this honour, that one man holding the sceptre of command should bear sway over Asia the land of flocks. For the first leader of the people was a Mede¹; and next his son² completed the work which he had commenced, because wisdom directed the helm of his mind. But Cyrus, a man favoured by Heaven, having succeeded him the third monarch, established peace for all his friends; and he added to his empire the nations of the Lydians and the Phrygians, and subdued all Ionia by force of arms. For the God did not hate him, since his thoughts were well regulated. But a son of Cyrus³ was the fourth who governed the people; and Smerdis reigned the fifth, a disgrace to this country and the ancient throne: but him the brave Artaphrenes slew in his palace by stratagem⁴, aided by the friends who had undertaken this just work. And I both gained the lot which I desired, and led forth many expeditions with many a warlike band; but I never brought so great a calamity on my country. But Xerxes, my son, being youthful, has youthful thoughts, and bears not in mind my injunctions. For be well and clearly assured of this, ye companions of my youth! that all of us who have borne this power shall not appear to have been the authours of so many evils.

CHORUS.—What then, king Darius? Whither do you aim the scope of your words? How, after these misfortunes, may we, the Persian people, yet manage our affairs for the best?

DARIUS.—If you lead not again your arms against the

(1) Astyages. (2) Cyaxares.
(4) See Herod. III. 70.

(3) Cambyses.

country of the Greeks, not even if the Persian army exceed them in numbers ; for the soil itself acts as an ally to them.

CHORUS.—What mean you by these words ? and in what way does it aid them ?

DARIUS.—By slaying with famine those who come too numerously on their steeds to the war¹.

CHORUS.—But shall we undertake an expedition with more compact and chosen forces ?

DARIUS.—No ; for not even the army now remaining in the land of Greece shall obtain a safe return.

CHORUS.—How sayest thou ? For shall not all the army of the Barbarians pass from Europe across the Straits of Helle ?

DARIUS.—Few shall part where many meet² : if, looking to what has now been done, one may give any credence to the oracles of the Gods ; for they are not wont to be in part fulfilled, and in part to fail. And if these events have taken place, he leaves a chosen number of his army, persuaded by empty hopes ; and they remain where Asopus waters the plain with his streams, spreading grateful fertility through the land of the Boeotians. There it awaits them to suffer the extremity of misery, in reward of their arrogance and impious pride, who, coming to the land of Greece, were not deterred by the sacrilege from making the images of the Gods their plunder, and consuming with fire their shrines³. Of the altars, too, no trace is left ; and low lie the sacred abodes of the Deities, uprooted from their foundations : therefore, having done evil deeds, they suffer no less in return ; and part they are about to suffer ;

(1) Wellauer reads *νηρωλλούς*, which would be a decided improvement in the text.

(2) Only 43,000 escaped. Herod. IX. 70.

(3) In revenge, if we may believe Herodotus, for the Athenians having burnt the temple of Cybele in Sardis. Cicero, de Leg. II. 10, makes us acquainted with the motive which the Persians themselves professed: “ Nec sequor Magos Persarum, quibus auctoribus Xerxes inflammâsse templa Græciae dicitur, quod parietibus includerent Deos, quibus omnia deberent esse patentia et libera.”

nor does yet the bottom of the cup of misery appear, but still its waters gush freely: for so great is the libation of reeking blood that in the land of the Platæans shall be shed by the Doric spear, while the heaps of the dead shall even in the third generation silently testify to the eyes of posterity that it becomes not man proudly to deem that he is more than mortal. For insolence bursting into flower brings forth as its fruit the ears of calamity, whence man reaps a harvest of saddest tears. Seeing that such are the rewards of these daring attempts, remember Athens¹ and Greece; nor let any one, despising his present fortune and eagerly desiring some other, let his great prosperity be wasted. Jove is the chastiser of pride that vaunts itself too highly, severe in the account which he exacts. Do ye, therefore, by your prudent admonitions, warn him devoid of wisdom to cease insulting the Gods with his audacious arrogance. But do you, O aged and beloved mother of Xerxes, having entered the palace and taken such apparel as is becoming, go forth to meet your son; for through grief at these calamities the rendings have utterly destroyed around his person the tissue of the embroidered garments. But do you mildly soothe him with your words; for I know that he will only submit to listen to you. And now I depart to the realms of darkness below the earth². But do you, old men, indulge in joy, although in these unfortunate circumstances, imparting each day fresh pleasures to your souls; since to the dead, wealth is of no avail.

CHORUS.—Assuredly I grieved as I heard of the many calamities of the Barbarians, both present and impending.

(1) “Quo Darius monito quam egregiè Attici hominis adumbrabat terorem, tam parùm sapienter suam ipsius stultitiam in memoriam revocabat Atheniensibus, quos contra ille diceretur Sardis ab iis captas nuntio allato ita animo exacerbatus esse, ut ne qua ipsum ultioris caperet oblio, appositià quaque cœnâ ter sibi à servo quodam dictitari juberet: δέοντα μέμνεο τῶν Ἀθηναίων.”—SIEBELIS.

(2) “Discedam, explebo numerum, reddarque tenebris.”

Virg. *Aen.* VI. 545.

ATOSSA.—O fortune! how many bitter sorrows pierce my heart! but chiefly this calamity pains me, hearing of the dishonour of the robes¹ around the person of my son with which he is enveloped. But I go; and having taken a garment from the palace, I will attempt to meet my son; for we will not in their misfortunes betray those that are dearest to us².

CHORUS.—O ye Gods! we surely enjoyed a glorious and happy life, under civic rule, when the aged and godlike Darius, a monarch powerful, blameless of ill, and invincible in battle, held the sceptre of the land. In the first place, indeed, we were distinguished for the renown of our arms, and the laws of our cities directed every action; and return, when the war was past, led us, without hardship or suffering, in triumph to our homes. But how many cities³ did he take, without passing the channel of the river Halys, or impetuously departing afar from home! such as are the maritime cities by the Strymonian Sea, adjoining the dwellings of the Thracians; and those without the *Æ*gean, which, encircled along the shore with towers, were obedient to the mandates of this king; and the subject States around the broad sea of Helle, and the gulphs of the Propontis, and the mouth of the Euxine. And his were the sea-girt

(1) “ Atqui frigidum hoc, reginam de lacerâ veste tantum ingemiscere, nisi ei adderetur pecularis infamia, quam, quæ fuerit, optimè monuit Brunck. Quem vide in Notis Varr. Critt. ad v. 835.”—BUTLER.

(2) “ Hæc elocuta regina discedit, nec posteà in scenam revertitur. Et callidè quidem hoc instituit *Æ*schylus; gratius enim populo Atheniensem futurum esse intelligebat, ut tragœdia in dolore Xerxis, quam in solitione finiretur.”—SCHÜTZ.

(3) “ Hujus recensuſ causâ quanquam repeti potest ab *Æ*schyleo regiones, fluvios, montes populosque numerandi singulari studio ac consuetudine, hîc tamen nescio an irâ et invidiâ Græcorum animos in Medi injuriam incendi, eosque ad recuperandas illas terras inflammandi desiderio ac cupiditate poëtæ fuerit consilium, quoniam non omnes omnium populorum terræ à Dario captæ, sed illæ imprimis, quas Græci incolebant, recensentur.”—SIEBELIS.

(4) “ Αχελωῖδες non sunt Acheloides insulæ, quas ignorant hoc loco Geographi, sed δχελωῖδες πόλεις dicuntur urbes maritimæ, quia, ut rectè monet Scholiastes, omne θεωρητὸν Αχελόφον appellabatur.”—SCHÜTZ.

islands that lie along the promontory of the sea ~~beside~~ this land ; such as, Lesbos, and Samos renowned for its olives, Chios, and Paros, Naxos, Myconus, and Andros lying closely adjoined to Tenos. And his power controlled the islands of the deep that are situated between the two continents, Lemnos, and the seat of Icarus, and Rhodes, and Gnidus, and the cities of Cyprus, Paphos and Solos, and Salamis, the parent city¹ of which is the cause of our present groans. He gained the command, too, by his prudence, of the wealthy and populous cities throughout the district of Ionia ; for there was present to his behest the unconquerable strength of mail-clad warriors, and of allies from every nation. But now we have, in no dubious way, to bear, by Heaven's decree, the reverse of these glories, being fatally quelled by the battle and by our disasters on the deep.

XERXES.

Ah ! wretched mortal that I am, having met with this hateful and most unexpected fate ! how cruelly has fortune assailed the race of the Persians ! Oh what shall I do in my miseries ? for the strength of my limbs grows faint as I look on these aged citizens. Would to Jove, that, along with my soldiers who perished, the fate of death had also enshrouded me !

CHORUS.—Alas, O king, for the goodly army, and the high honour of Persia's rule, and the flower of her warriors, whom our evil fortune hath now laid low ! and the land laments her native youth, all slain by Xerxes, whose victims fill Hades. For the Agdabatæ, the banded warriors of Persia and flower of the country, whose conquering weapon was the bow, (for vast were the numbers of the mingled host) are all utterly destroyed !

XERXES.—Alas and alas ! Alas and alas ! how fruitless was their prowess !

CHORUS.—And the land of Asia, O king of the country ! is grievously, grievously bowed to the dust.

(1) Salamis, and not Athens ; as Stanley and Schütz have, by some strange perversity, understood it.

XERXES.—It is even I, O woe! woe! woe! who in misery and misfortune have proved such a bane to my race and the land of my fathers!

CHORUS.—As meet salutation of your return, I will utter the words of evil omen, the wailing ejaculation and loud lamenting notes of the Mariandynian mourner.

XERXES.—Give voice to the tuneless strain that tells of sorrow and of gloom; for now hath a reverse of fortune assailed me.

CHORUS.—I will in truth utter the bitterest wailing, in horror at the severe disasters by sea which were suffered by the people of the race of this city; and will again loudly raise the melancholy dirge of the mourner. For the Mars of our naval strength, yielding the victory to others, reaped such mishaps from the Ionians, as he swept the darkling surface of the sea and that ill-fated shore.

XERXES.—Alas! alas! alas! Inquire, and learn all our loss.

CHORUS.—Where then are the others of your many friends? Where are the warriors that fought by your side; such as, Pharandaces, Susas, Pelagon, Dotamas and Agdabatas, Psammis and Susiscanes who left the walls of Ecbatana?

XERXES.—I left them by the shores of Salamis, where they had fallen in death from a Tyrian ship, dashing against the rugged promontories.

CHORUS.—Alas! alas! where is Pharnuchus, and Ario-mardus the brave? Where is the princely Seualces, and high-born Lilaeus? where Memphis, Tharybis, and Masis-tras, Artembares, and Hystæchmas? Their fate I again demand of you.

XERXES.—Ah me! having seen the ancient walls of hateful Athens, they all, wretched, overthrown at once, alas! alas! alas! lie with quivering limbs on the earth.

CHORUS.—Have you also left your most faithful eye, who numbered the Persians by tens of thousands, Alpistos the son of Batanochus, the son of Sesamas, the son of

Megabates, and Parthus, and the mighty Æbaros? Alas! alas, for their wretched fate! You tell of ills that have befallen in the heaviest degree the illustrious Persians.

XERXES.—You recall to my mind, in truth, the lamentation due to my brave companions, as you speak of these worst of ills, hateful and never to be forgotten. My heart within my bosom keeps mourning and mourning for their loss.

CHORUS.—And we have at least another to regret, Xanthus the leader of ten thousand Mardian warriors, and the gallant Anchares, and Diæxis and Arsames the captains of the horse, Kigdatas, and Lythimas, and Tolmas unwearied in fight.

XERXES.—They were buried, they were there buried, not following behind us on biers conveyed in cars!

CHORUS.—For are they dead, who were the leaders of the army?

XERXES.—They are dead, alas! and ingloriously! Ah! ah! alas! alas!

CHORUS.—Alas! alas! ye Gods! ye have brought on us an unexpected evil, surpassing all that Atè has looked on.

XERXES.—We have at length, alas! suffered severely by misfortune.

CHORUS.—We have suffered, it is too plain; ah! new afflictions, new afflictions, having unsuccessfully encountered the Ionian mariners. The race of the Persians is in truth fated to calamity.

XERXES.—But how should not I, wretched, deeply feel the loss of so great an army?

CHORUS.—Why should you not? Are not the mighty of the Persians fallen?

XERXES.—Do you see this remnant of my robes?

CHORUS.—I see, I see.

XERXES.—And this quiver—

CHORUS.—What is this that you say is saved?

XERXES.—The repository of my arrows?

CHORUS.—But a little, from so much.

XERXES.—We are left destitute of allies.

CHORUS.—The people of the Ionians tremble not at the spear.

XERXES.—They are gallant men: but I have seen an unexpected calamity.

CHORUS.—You mean the flight of the naval host.

XERXES.—Yes; and I rent my robes when this evil occurred.

CHORUS.—Alas! alas!

XERXES.—Aye, and even more than alas.

CHORUS.—For it is double and triple.

XERXES.—Sad to us, but joy to our enemies.

CHORUS.—And our strength has been mutilated.

XERXES.—I am destitute of my attendants.

CHORUS.—Owing to the disasters of your friends on the deep.

XERXES.—Shed your tears, shed your tears, for our loss; and return to the house.

CHORUS.—Alas and alas! alas and alas! O woe, woe!

XERXES.—Utter now your cries in response to me.

CHORUS.—An evil addition of evil on evil.

XERXES.—Wail forth your strains in unison with mine.

CHORUS.—Alas! alas!

XERXES.—Grievous in truth is this calamity.

CHORUS.—Alas! I also deeply feel the sorrow.

XERXES.—Dash, dash the blows on your breasts; and for my sake awake your groans.

CHORUS.—In my sorrow I shed the tear.

XERXES.—Utter now your cries in response to me.

CHORUS.—The care of this, O master, is present to me.

XERXES.—Now loudly swell the notes of the dirge.

CHORUS.—Alas! alas!

XERXES.—But mournful blows shall again be mingled.

CHORUS.—And blows accompanied with groans.

XERXES.—And beat your breast, and utter at the same time the Mysian lament.

CHORUS.—O sorrow! sorrow! sorrow!

XERXES.—And rend, at my request, the white hairs of your beard.

CHORUS.—Violently, violently, and with bitterest sorrow.

XERXES.—And shrilly shriek.

CHORUS.—All this will I do.

XERXES.—And tear, by the force of your hands, the folds of your robes.

CHORUS.—O sorrow! sorrow! sorrow!

XERXES.—And rend your locks, and utter your lamentations for the army.

CHORUS.—Violently, violently, and with bitterest sorrow.

XERXES.—And fill your eyes with tears.

CHORUS.—Lo! with tears they are bedewed.

XERXES.—Utter now your cries in response to me.

CHORUS.—Alas and alas! alas and alas!

XERXES.—With the cries of sorrow move towards the house.

CHORUS.—Alas! how sadly resounds the Persian land with wailing!

XERXES.—Alas! and throughout the city.

CHORUS.—Alas! too truly is it so.

XERXES.—Continue your laments, as ye slowly advance.

CHORUS.—Alas! how sadly resounds the Persian land with wailing! O woe! woe! woe!

XERXES.—O woe for them that perished in the barks with their triple banks of oars!

CHORUS.—I will conduct you on your way with the dismal strains of lamentation.



AGAMEMNON.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

AGAMEMNON.

ÆGISTHUS.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

CASSANDRA.

HERALD.

WATCHMAN.

CHORUS OF ARGIVE ELDERS.

AGAMEMNON.

WATCHMAN.

I IMPLORE of the Gods a release from these toils, some solace of that annual watching, in which resting, like a dog, above the roofs of the Atridæ, I have marked the assembly of the stars of night, and those bright potentates that bring winter and summer to mortals, shedding radiance through the sky ! And now I watch for the signal of the beacon, the ray of flame that conveys the intelligence from Troy, and tidings of its capture ; for thus commands the masculine¹ spirit of the queen, in expectation of the event. But when I occupy my couch disturbed throughout the night and steeped with dews, not visited by dreams, then fear instead of sleep takes its place beside me, so that I cannot securely seal my eyelids in repose : and when I think fit to sing or whistle, preparing this remedy of music as an antidote to sleep, then I lament with groans the calamity of this house, which is not, as of yore, directed in the most virtuous course. But now may a fortunate release from my toils arrive, the flame with its happy tidings having burst through the darkness ! O hail, thou beacon of night ! that heraldest with thy beams the light of day, and the commencement of many a dance in Argos through joy at this event. Io ! Io ! I clearly declare to the wife of

(1) “ Potter has very properly censured Stanley for his mistake in rendering *ἀνδροβόντος* ‘ *viro insidiantem* ;’ but has himself fallen into a greater error, in rendering it ‘ *thinking of her lord*.’ The meaning very clearly is, as I have rendered it, ‘ *a man in counsel*,’ ‘ *a manly-minded woman*. ’ ”—SYMMONS.

Agamemnon, that, rising from her couch with all speed, she raise on high in the palace the cry of joy that bids hail to this torch; if in truth the city of Ilion has been taken, as this beacon shines to announce. I myself will lead the prelude of the dance: for I will lay it down that the affairs of my master have fallen out prosperously, this beacon-light having thrown thrice six for me. May it be mine, then, on the return of the king of this house, to support with this hand his friendly hand! But as to the rest I am silent: a strong restraint¹ has come on my tongue; and the house itself, if it gained a voice, would tell its secrets most clearly: so that I willingly speak out to those who understand, and affect to forget to the ignorant.

CHORUS.

This full surely is the tenth year since the mighty adversary of Priam, the royal Menelaus and Agamemnon, delegated each by Jove to the honour of the throne and sceptre, the valiant pair of the sons of Atreus, led from this shore their martial powers, the armament of the Argives with its thousand ships², venting from the mind in clamours the fiery spirit of battle; like vultures, who, grieving for the removal of their young³, wheel in circles

(1) The ancient Greek coins were stamped with the image of an ox; and hence the proverbial expression in the original, which will not admit of a literal translation.

(2) “Rex ille regum, dux Agamemnon ducum,
Cujus sequutæ mille vexillum rates.” *Sen. Agam.* 39.

(3) “Mourning apart in deep untrodden glades:”

“So I have rendered *ἐκταῖοις ἀλγεστοῖς*, literally, ‘*mourning out of the paths*,’ ‘*mourning in unfrequented and untrodden places*,’ which appears more natural and poetical, as well as more correct, than the tortuous explanation of the Scholiast adopted by Heath, Dr. Blomfield, and Stanley. The Scholiast asserts that *ἐκταῖοις* is put for *ἐκταῖαι*, and that the epithet, though formally agreeing with *ἀλγεστοῖς*, yet really applies to *ταῖαι*. Admitting the hypallage, yet the word *ἐκταῖαι* could not mean ‘*sublato-rum*,’ as Stanley has rendered it; whereas the sense I have given it is the natural and easy one.” SYMMONS. We willingly admit the superior beauty of this interpretation, but we conceive, at the same time, that it is too fanciful, and have therefore refrained from adopting it in our humbler version.

above their nests, swooping through the air with the oar-like strokes of their wings, and lamenting that they have lost in their callow brood the object of all their cares¹. But some one on high, either Apollo, or Pan, or Jove, having heard the shrill-lamenting cry of the mourning birds, sends Erinnys on the transgressors, to exact late vengeance for these outcast young. And thus doth Almighty Jove, protector of the host, send the sons of Atreus against Paris, preparing alike for the Greeks and the Trojans full many an exhausting struggle, when in the combat for the oft-wedded bride² the knee should be planted in the dust, and

(1) In this passage we entirely concur with the elegant scholar to whom we have just referred; and we have much pleasure in quoting in our defence the following note, which is written in the very best spirit of criticism:—"The expression in this passage of *πόνον δραλίχων διεσάρτες* is absurdly understood, by Potter and others, as equivalent to the English phrase 'losing their pains,' which is refuted by the epithet *δεμιοτήρη*. *Πόνον δραλίχων* means 'the young birds themselves, the tender object of the care of their parents,' (so forcible and comprehensive is the Greek language, in the hands of a poet!) In short, it means, by a bold figure, what would be expressed in common Greek thus: *διέσαρτες τούς δραλίχους ἐφ οἷς πεκοντήστες εἰνεν.* Spenser, whether from imitation, or more probably from poetical coincidence, elegantly uses the same figure in speaking of a hind deprived of her young:

"Right sorrowfully mourning her bereaved cares."

It is really mortifying to see a fine passage so ill used: Musgrave is the least delinquent, who would read *γόνον* for *πόνον*, though that would be to take a plume from the poet: but one cannot help feeling angry with Stanley, Potter, and Dr. Blomfield, for rendering *διεσάρτες πόνον δραλίχων δεμιοτήρην*, 'losing their pains in guarding the beds of their young,' instead of 'losing their unshed and bed-reposing cares.' What great poet, instead of positively and directly stating such a calamity, would state it thus by circumlocution, and as it were by induction? as if losing their pains was a loss to be considered, when they had lost their young themselves! What a style of writing! Besides, *δεμιοτήρη* does not mean *guarding* a bed, but *keeping* a bed, or lying in a bed, and is here applied to the young ones lying in their nest. And this is the very sense in which it is used in line 1424 of this play; and this is the very sense Hesychius gives the word, referring to this very passage."

(2) Helen is so designated from having been carried off in the first instance by Theseus, married by Menelaus, and subsequently living as a wife with Paris and Deiphobus. The errors and misfortunes of her love^{were}

the spear-wood shivered in the onset of the fray. But their fortunes remain where they now are; and yet shall they be consummated according to the will of Destiny. For neither by wailing, nor by libations, nor by tears, shall you soothe the inflexible wrath of those sacred Powers that are unworshipped with flame¹. But we, with these aged and unhonoured persons being left behind that warlike levy, remain at home, guiding by the aid of the staff a strength as feeble as infancy: for the youthful marrow gushing up within the breast is fraught with a vigour equal to that of age, and Mars dwells not in that region; and extreme old age, when its foliage is already sere, advances on its path supported by three feet, and, in no respect more vigorous than childhood, flits about like a day-dream.

But thou, O daughter of Tyndarus, our queen Clytemnestra! what event has occurred? what news have reached you? and what having heard, by what tidings moved, dost thou offer at the shrines these distributed gifts? The altars of all the Gods who preside over our city, both those above and those below, the Gods of the Heaven and the Gods of the Forum, are blazing with thy oblations; and here and there the flame of the torch streams upward to the heaven, being drugged with the soothing and unadulterated power of purest unguent, the clotted oil from the stores of the palace. Of all this, answer me that which

were owing to the anger of Venus, who thus chose to punish Tyndarus for having omitted her rites on a day of solemn sacrifice.

(1) Alluding to the Furies, whose rites were marked by this peculiarity. Dr. Blomfield denies the fact, and of course the inference, but suggests an explanation which is by no means equally satisfactory. Wellauer takes it in a different sense, and seems satisfied that it means nothing more than a denunciation of general impiety; or, as he has translated the expression, "*ira ob desideratam sacrificiorum flamمام*." Mr. Symmons is contented with the common view of the passage, which he has thus elegantly translated:

" For vain are tears and mortal cries,
And the drink-off'rer's sacrifice,
To soothe th' inexorable shrines
Where the dim taper never shines."

is in your power and lawful for you to accord ; and prove to me the healer of this anxious care, which now is at one time indeed full of evil presage ; and at another, hope, inspired by the sacrifice, blandly cheering me repels that insatiate anxiety, the anguish of thought that corrodes the mind.

I am inspired to sing of the rightful power of the Chiefs in command that was met by omens on the way ;— for still from heaven doth my being inhale the persuasive charm of song, a power congenial to my age—how the impetuous eagle, the king of birds, sends the two associate Princes of the Achæans, the harmonious leaders of the Grecian youth, with the spear and the avenging hand, against the Trojan land ; having appeared to the kings of the ships, the one with black plumage, the other white behind, near the palace, in a conspicuous station on the spear-hand¹, feeding on a hare, with the teeming brood of its womb, for ever marred of running another course. Sing the song of woe, the song of woe ; but may happier fortune prevail² !

The prudent Prophet of the host, seeing the two sons of Atreus with twin dispositions, recognised in them the warlike devourers of the hare, and the leaders of the sway ; and thus he spoke, interpreting the portent :— “ In time, this expedition shall take the city of Priam ; and all the possessions of her towers that formerly enriched the people

(1) “ Potter has been guilty of an omission, in not rendering this particularity of description *χερὸς ἐκ δορυκάλτου*, literally ‘ *on the spear-hand*,’ that is, ‘ *the right*;’ as we say, in English, ‘ *the sword-arm*.’ Dr. Blomfield observes, that Schneider was the first who pointed out this meaning, which is sufficiently plain of itself. *Milton, Par. Lost. IV.:*

— ‘ As flame they part,
Half wheeling to the shield, half to the spear.’ ” —

SYMMONS.

(2) “ *Quia portentum illud duarum aquilarum partim faustum, partim ob iram Dianæ infaustum erat, precatur Chorus, ut lætior pars vincat, ut bona tantum omnia rata sint, mala verò irrita.* ” SCHÜTZ. The song of woe alluded to by the Chorus is supposed to have been derived, as its name in the original indicates, from the lamentations of the Muse over her son Linus.

their way, kept wasting the flower of the Argives. But when the Prophet declared to the Chiefs another remedy even more grievous than the bitter tempest, alleging Diana's wrath as its cause, the sons of Atreus, dashing their sceptres on the ground, could not restrain the tear: and thus the elder king exclaimed and said:—"Severe is the doom to disobey; and severe if I shall slay my child, the idol of my house, staining a father's hands beside the altar with the streams of her virgin blood. Which of these alternatives is without evil? How shall I forsake the cause of the fleet, and prove untrue to my confederates? For it is lawful for them to wish with the most passionate desire for a sacrifice to still the winds, and for the blood of the virgin; since the issue would be well."

But when he had submitted to the yoke of necessity¹, breathing an impious, unholy, and polluted change of purpose, then he renounced wisdom for utter audacity. For the wretched delirium arising from first transgression, suggesting thoughts of ill, emboldens man to sin. He had the heart, then, to become the sacrificer of his daughter, that she might be the aid of a war that sought vengeance for a woman, and the first offering for the fleet; and the Chiefs, thirsting for the fight, did nought regard her prayers and her calling on her father's name and her virgin life. When the ritual prayer was finished, her father bade the ministers of sacrifice seize with all alacrity her prostrate body infolded in her robes, and lay her, like some young fawn, above the altar, keeping watch on the lips of her beauteous face, that they might restrain any words of imprecation on the house by violence and by the stifling power of bands. But letting

(1) "Mira est in hac Strophâ tum sententiarum tum dictionum sublimitas. Agamemnon audaci metaphorâ loro necessitatis adductus dicitur; mox verò fervens poëta ad audaciorem transit, φρενὸς τροπαῖαν scilicet, deinde humanae mentis conditio, quæ ut in scelera proclivis sit, ubi semel impetum acceperit facilè præceps ruat, describitur, quam breviter, sed quam gravissimè. Ferocitas verò ducum ad bellum ardantium, et virginis preces patris invocantis aspernantium, et παρ' οὐδὲν θεμένων, ita vel hac unâ imagine depingitur, ut nihil ad rem ipsam declarandam, vel ad affectus commovendos præclararius cogitari possit."—BUTLER.

flow to the ground the folds of her saffron veil, she thrilled each of her sacrificers with the melting beams of pity from her eyes, and looked, as though in a picture, wishing to speak: since oft in the hospitable halls of her sire she had sung, and in her virgin estate had with chaste voice affectionately honoured the life of her beloved father worthy of the third libation and blessed with happy fate¹. What followed I saw not, nor tell; but the arts of Calchas are not without completion. Justice makes knowledge come to man by suffering. But as to the future, since there may be no escape, let the thought of it be far from us: for that were the same as lamenting calamity before it came; and the future will clearly arrive, in accordance with these predictions. May good fortune then result in the coming hour! as pray we, the nearest and sole support of the Apian land.

I come, Clytemnestra, reverencing your power; for it is right to honour the wife of a ruling Chief, when the throne is deprived of the male. If having heard some good intelligence, or if not, you only sacrifice on the hopes of happy tidings, I would fain know: but if you be silent, I am not displeased.

(1) The reader will do well to compare with this beautiful passage the rival description of the same scene in Lucretius I. 83. For his further gratification, we take the liberty of making the following extract from the version of Mr. Symmons:—

“ Now as she stood, and her descending veil,
Let down in clouds of saffron, touch'd the ground,
The priests, and all the sacrificers round,
All felt the melting beams that came
With softest pity wing'd, shot from her lovely eyes.
Like some imagined pictured maid she stood,
So beauteous look'd she, seeming as she would
Speak, yet still mute: though oft her father's halls
Magnificent among,
She, now so mute, had sung
Full many a lovely air,
In maiden beauty, fresh and fair;
And with the warbled music of her voice
Made all his joyous bowers still more rejoice.”

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Bearing glad tidings, as runs the proverb, may the Morning be ushered from its mother Night! But you shall learn a joy beyond what you expected to hear: for the Argives have taken the city of Priam.

CHORUS.—How say you? Your words have escaped me, in consequence of my disbelief.

CLYTEM.—I say that Troy is in the possession of the Achæans. Do I now speak clearly?

CHORUS.—Joy steals over all my senses, calling forth the tear.

CLYTEM.—Your eye gives token of your friendly sentiments.

CHORUS.—But have you any certain proof of the tidings you relate?

CLYTEM.—I have: and why not? if the God hath not deceived me.

CHORUS.—Is it that you pay regard to the specious visions of dreams?

CLYTEM.—No: for I would not admit the fancies of the soul when steeped in slumber.

CHORUS.—Has some sudden rumour, then, been the cause of your joy?

CLYTEM.—You scorn my judgment, like that of some young girl.

CHORUS.—But how long is it since the city has been sacked?

CLYTEM.—I tell thee, that it was during the night that gave birth to this dawn.

CHORUS.—And what messenger could come with such speed?

CLYTEM.—'Twas Vulcan, pouring forth from Ida the splendour of his beams; and beacon hither sent on beacon kindled from the courier flame. Ida first transmitted the light to the Hermæan steeps of Lemnos: and Athos, the mountain of Jove, next received the mighty torch from the island; and the flame of the pine rising joyously on high, so that the strong reflection of that speeding

lamp was flung along the ridges of the waves, heralded like the sun the flashings of its golden blaze to the watchman of Macistus. And he, not delaying his duty nor carelessly overcome by sleep, passed on the entrusted message ; and the light of the beacon, piercing afar to the streams of the Euripus, signifies its approach to the watchmen of Messapius ; and they answered the signal of the flame, and communicated it onward by lighting up a heap of withered heath. And the glare of the torch brightening and in no wise dimmed, having danced like the glittering moon-beams across the plain of Asopus to the cliffs of Cithæron, awoke in succession another beacon, to waft its tidings onward. Nor did the watch disown the far-sprung light, but kindled a greater blaze than any of the former. The light thence darted beyond the lake Gorgopis ; and coming to the mountain of Ægiplancton, urged its watchmen not to neglect the regular succession of the fire. They kindling into resistless fury the streaming beard of fire, sent it flaming on, so as to tower beyond the promontory that looks down on the Saronic Gulf : thence it flung its light, till it came to the Arachnæan steeps, our neighbouring watch-tower : and last, it bursts on these roofs of the sons of Atreus, a light that claims a genuine origin from the Idæan fire. Such has been the succession of these speeders of the torch, each from each in turn receiving it ; and the last and the first in the course are the best. Such a proof and such tokens do I declare to you, my husband having transmitted to me the tidings from Troy¹.

CHORUS.—I will pray hereafter, O queen, to the Gods : but I would gladly again hear at length, and wonder at the tale you tell.

(1) “Quod si fabulosæ sint faces istæ Agamemnoniæ quas Æschylus memorat Clytemnestrae fuisse nuntias Trojæ captæ, & Trojâ Mycenæ usque, saltèm certum est veras esse potuisse ; cùm faces in Idâ accensæ facile possint videri ab iis qui in summo Athone versantur, ac quivis nuntius similiter per faces traduces ex uno monte in alium ad remotissima etiam loca momento penè possit propagari.” *Isaac. Voss. ad Melam.* I. 2. p. 119.

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should the army come without erring in its course, and no fresh deeds of ill be done, still the blood of the slain might not be forgotten by the Gods. Such sentiments you may hear from me, a woman; but may our better fortunes prevail, and so that the balance may not seem dubiously poised! for I would wish to be blessed with the enjoyment of many goods'.

CHORUS.—O queen, your words display a prudence like that of a wise man: but I, having heard from you these undoubted proofs, prepare myself duly to address the Gods; for the grateful toils that have been atchieved are not undeserving of honour.—O royal Jove! and friendly night, disposer of great glories, who over the towers of Troy didst fling the enclosing toils, so that neither could strength nor youth avail to bound over the mighty drag-net of slavery, a visitation that swept them all! I humbly adore the mighty Jove, protector of the host, the God that hath wrought this deed, who long since bent his bow against Paris, so that neither before its hour, nor yet in vain flight beyond the stars, he might discharge the bolt. They have not escaped the weapon of Jove: this we may safely assert, and clearly trace in the event: His hand hath wrought what his will decreed. Some one denied that the Gods deigned to regard those mortals by whom the reverence for what is holy was trampled under foot: but his sentiment was not pious; for such men have shewn themselves² to be the offspring of those who breathe the audacious spirit of desperate deeds more than what is just,

(1) "Mihi quidem γὰρ ad praecedens μὴ διχορέως ἰσεῖν referendum videtur, ut sensus hic sit: *Vincat id quod bonum est, sine ambiguitate: multorum enim bonorum fructum, hoc dicens, mihi delegi.*"—WELLAUER.

(2) "Why should Dr. Blomfield so boldly pronounce this passage to be corrupt?—why should he attempt to re-write it? that is, entirely to change the thoughts and phrases of his author, on account of a schoolboy difficulty as to the number of πέφασται, and the usage of ξαρκεῖν, which word occurs in a line of Solon, cited by Plutarch, in much the same sense as it is used here." SYMMONS. It cannot be denied that there is some truth in this censure; but we are not the more inclined on that account to agree with the learned critic in his own view of the passage. It is fair,

CLYTEM.—This very day the Greeks are in possession of 'Troy. Through her streets, methinks, there reign no harmonious sounds. Pour the oil and the vinegar into the same vase, and you will say they are at variance and unwilling to unite. Thus you may hear apart the voices of the captives and the conquerors, on account of their different fortunes. These indeed, having fallen on the bodies of husbands and brothers, and children clinging to their aged parents, shall no longer with unenthralled necks lament the fate of their dearest kindred. But the toil of the restless night places their conquerors beside the banquet, to satiate their hunger, now the battle is past, on all the city affords, according to no certain order of distribution in turn, but as each has drawn the lot of fortune. In the subject abodes of the Trojans they now dwell secure from the dews and frosts of the inclement sky, and, like the favoured of fortune¹, shall sleep through the whole unguarded night. And if they duly reverence the Gods who preside over the city of the conquered land², they shall not, after having been the spoilers, become in turn the prey. But let no passion first seize the army, to desire, through the persuasion of gain, that which is forbidden! For they have yet again to trace the other side of the double stadium, so as to obtain a safe return to their homes: and even

(1) The common reading is *δυσδαλμονες*, which Mr. Symmons has adopted and translated,

— “like careless poor men tired,

Sleep through the watches of th’ unguarded night.”

(2) “It was observed, in the preface to this tragedy, that the character of Clytemnestra is that of a high-spirited, close, determined, dangerous woman: this character now begins to unfold itself. She had with deep premeditation planned the murder of her husband: he was now returning: her soul of course must at this time be full of her horrid design, and all her thoughts intent upon the execution of it: we have in the remaining part of this speech a strong proof of this; she is dark, sententious, and even religious; so the Chorus understands her words, and so she intends they should; but the very expressions by which she wishes to conceal, and does conceal, her purpose from the Argive senators, by being ambiguous, and comprehending a double meaning, so far mark the working of her mind, as to give us a hint of what is revolving there.”—POTTER.

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their houses teeming with superfluous wealth beyond what is good for man. But may a lot secure from calamity be mine, so that I may rest content, possessing my soul in virtue! For there is no defence in wealth to prevent the ruin of the man who in wanton pride hath spurned the mighty altar of Justice: for the wretched persuasion¹ of fated calamity urges him on, suggesting intolerable counsels for posterity; and relief is altogether hopeless. The man is not concealed, but stands confessed in pestilential and glaring guilt; and, like adulterate brass, he is proved by attrition and allusion to be but one mass of blackness; since he chases as some boy the winged bird, and entails on his country intolerable affliction. Of the Gods there is no one to regard his prayer, and their vengeance destroys the guilty wretch who is conversant with these deeds. And such was Paris, who, coming to the mansion of the sons of Atreus, profaned the hospitable board by the rape of a wedded dame: but she, having left to her countrymen the tumults of the shield and the spear and the arming of mariners, and bearing to Troy destruction for her dowry, passed quickly through the gates, daring what all duty

however that we should give the reader an opportunity of judging of its merits, by transcribing it, as it stands in his spirited version:—

“ So said the impious; but the Gods
 Have shewn themselves in dreadful view,
 E'en to the children of aspiring kings,
 And to these hosts of war in armour bright
 Steel'd and caparison'd for lawless fight,
 Whilst plumed Mars breathed horror on their helms:
 And to the plenteous palaces of pride,
 The towers of grandeur, and the thrones of state,
 Too glorious to be good.”

(1) “ Vice has its assuasive charms; but the remedy is not entirely concealed, as the mischief glares through her disguise; and as adulterate brass is discovered by a proper trial, so is it with the wicked, who pursues his wanton sports to the destruction of his country: considering the subject, the allusion to a boy pursuing a bird has a singular propriety and beauty: here the great moral recurs again, that vice shall not be unpunished; and the whole is applied to Paris, who, in violation of the sacred rights of hospitality, bore away the wife of Menelaus.”—POTTER.

forbade. And deeply did the Prophets of the house lament giving vent to these words:—"Alas for this house! alas for this house and its lords! Alas for the nuptial bed, and traces of her once-loyal love! Lo there she silent stands¹ bereaved of her honour, and yet by us unreviled, the fairest, now that all is lost, that eye may behold! In his grief for the loss of her who is far beyond the sea, her image shall still seem to be queen in the palace: for the beauty of shapely statues is hateful to the husband; and in the lack-lustre of the eye all charm of love is lost. But mournful visions shall haunt his dreams, and imbue them with an illusive joy. For vain is the illusion, when, as he thinks that he beholds the presence of good, the vision, passing through his hands, departs soon after on wings that attend the paths of sleep."— Such sorrows as these dwell by the hearth of the house, and sorrows even transcending these. But through the whole land there is marked grief of the suffering heart in every abode, for the banded warriors who left the Grecian shore. Ah! many are the pangs that pierce to the heart: for all know whom they have sent forth, and in place of men their armour and their ashes return to the homes of each. And Mars, who barters his victims for gold, and holds the balance in the combat of the spear, sends from the pyres of Troy the relics of their dust, to be steeped in affection's bitter tears, filling the graceful urn with ashes instead of the warrior! Their kindred lament the brave; praising one as well-skilled in fight, and one as having gallantly died in the slaughter on account of another's wife. Thus each in secret murmurs; and the indignation of their sorrow spreads against the sons of Atreus, the champions of the cause. But others, who fell there in beauty's bloom, are laid around the wall, in sepulchres of the Trojan land,

(1) These expressions may be supposed to allude to some statue of Helen, which, suddenly presented to the eye, awoke the remembrance of her beauty in those who were lamenting her crime. The passage has been much disputed, but we do not see any reason to condemn it as corrupt.

and it is a hostile soil that hath closed on the tenants of its tombs. But the angry rumours of citizens are grievous to be borne, and their effect resembles the solemn imprecation of a people¹. My anxious mind expects to hear of some deed palled in blackest night: for the Gods forget not to mark those whose hands are red with blood; and sooner or later the dark Furies consign to obscurity, in a changed reverse of life, the man who in prosperity regarded not Justice; and feeble is the power of him who ranks among the unknown. But yet the enjoyment of too high fame is dangerous, for the lightning of Jove smites the brow of its possessor. Unenvied happiness is the lot I would choose. May I neither be a spoiler of cities; nor yet, myself a captive, behold my life at the mercy of another!—The rumour awoke by the happy tidings of the beacon has quickly pervaded the city. But who can tell if it be true? We may well call it divine, if it be not false. And yet who is so childish, and so unendowed with prudence, as to have kindled his spirits at the news announced by the light, and then to feel sorrow at a change of the report. It suits with the sway of a woman to assent to the tidings of joy before 'it has appeared. The female sex² too quickly lends itself to easy credence, but the rumour which has only a woman for its herald perishes by a speedy fate.

CLYTEM.—We shall quickly know of these interchanges of the fire-bearing torches and beacons and flames, whether they be true, or whether, like dreams, this light that came to rejoice us deceived our minds. I see a herald, covered with boughs of olive, approaching near from the shore; and the thirsty dust, the kindred brother of mud³,

(1) See Blomf. Gloss. 444.

(2) Of all the vagaries of commentators, Mr. Symmons's note on this passage is by far the most extraordinary that we ever remember to have met with.

(3) "Ineptè. Pulvis ille est ipsum lutum aresfactum et comminutum: oculati vident statim." PAUW. If the metaphor were not otherwise in the worst taste, this objection would not be of much consequence. The criticism of Pauw, however, is divine, when compared with the atrocious

bears witness to me of this, that he will neither without words, nor by kindling the flame of wood on the mountains, signify his tidings by smoke and fire. But he will either by his words announce a fuller joy, or — but I abhor to think of a tale the reverse of this; for may good result, in addition to the good that has already appeared!

CHORUS.—May he who prays otherwise for this city reap in his own misfortunes the fruits of his sinful thoughts!

HERALD.

O paternal soil of the Argive land¹! to thee have I returned in the light of this tenth year, fortunate in one hope after the shipwreck of many others: for I never expected, that, dying in this Argive land, I should gain a share in a burial so dear. Now hail, thou earth! and hail thou light of the sun! and Jupiter, supreme in this realm! and thou, O King of Pytho, no longer winging against us the shafts from thy bow! By the banks of Scamander enough we felt thy rage. But now do thou prove our saviour and deliverer from the contest, O sovereign Apollo! And I implore all the Gods who arbitrate the strife of battle, and Hermes my patron, the friendly Herald by

cious absurdity of Schütz: “Pulverem *Æschylus sublimi* metaphora limi seu luti fratrem appellat, quæ tamen haud scio an audacior sit quam pro tragici colloquii pede ac modulo. Neque tamen veritas imagini deest. Una enim eademque ex terrâ, madore lutum, calore pulvis gignitur.”—It is strange that the German critic should not have written better on such a congenial subject, with a style that is drier than the dust, and brains that are thicker than its brother mud.

(1) “The unity of action is preserved in this play, but the unity of time would *appear* to be disregarded; for nothing but a miracle could have brought the Herald home so soon, supposing the exhibition of the beacons to have taken place immediately on the taking of Troy. Strictly speaking, however, the unity of time is not violated. The poet has hazarded a miracle or improbability off the stage, artificially and clandestinely concealed from the attention of the spectators; but every thing on the stage proceeds rapidly and consecutively in the space of a day, and nothing *there* occurs to mark any greater lapse of time.” SYMMONS. This defence is ingenious, but we suspect that it would scarcely be admitted before a tribunal of French critics, or any parcel of similar fools who hold the unities in honour.

heralds worshipped, and the heroes who sent us forth, again to receive propitiously the warriors who have been spared by the spear! O ye courts of our Princes, beloved abodes! and ye consecrated seats and Gods that front the sun! if ever before, O now, greet with the honour of your smiling aspects the late return of our king! For the royal Agamemnon comes, bringing a light that will dispel your gloom, and diffuse its beams to the whole of his people. But greet him well; for such meed is due, since he hath overthrown Troy with the spade¹ of avenging Jove, by the work of which it hath been uprooted from the soil. Its altars are no more, nor the seats of its Gods; and the offspring of the whole land hath for ever perished. Our king, the elder son of Atreus, a hero blessed by Heaven, having imposed such a yoke on Troy, returns to his home; and of all mankind he is the most worthy of honour in this age: for neither Paris nor the confederate city can boast of injuries greater than the retribution they have paid. Being cast in a suit of rapine and theft, he both forfeited his pledge, and in fatal ruins he levelled with the soil the house of his fathers. By a double penalty have the sons of Priam had to atone for their guilt.

CHORUS.—Joy to you, herald of the Achæans from the host!

HERALD.—I am elate with joy, and shall no longer refuse to the Gods to die.

CHORUS.—Has longing for this your native land preyed on your mind?

HERALD.—So that through joy my eyes now fill with tears.

CHORUS.—Have ye, too, been reached by this sweet infection?

HERALD.—How I pray? When informed, I shall be master of your meaning?

(1) This expression is mean and unpoetical; but of course it excites the admiration of Schütz, who calls it “*magnifica allegoria*”; as if, forsooth, even in a more common subject, there could be any magnificence in calling a spade a spade.

CHORUS.—Smitten with the desire of those who longed for you in return.

HERALD.—Do you mean that this land regretted the regretting army?

CHORUS.—So that I oft lamented in my secret soul.

HERALD.—Whence came this despondency, so hateful to the army?

CHORUS.—I have long since learned to maintain silence, as a remedy against mishap.

HERALD.—And how, in the absence of your lords, should you fear any one?

CHORUS.—So that, as your words now ran, even death were dearly welcome.

HERALD.—I said so, because our toils were successful; but thus, in a lengthened period, there are some things which you may say are well, and others again liable to censure: for who, except the Gods, is exempt from misfortune through the whole space of his life? Should I recount our hardships and inclement watches, our few opportunities of landing, and even then our rugged couches —— was there one moment of the day that was allotted us, but what we past in groans? But as to the evils that were added on shore, we had still more cause of abhorrence: for our repose was to be sought by the walls of the enemy; and dews from the sky and from that marshy soil kept drizzling upon us, the certain destruction of our garments, and the cause of our hair resembling that of wild beasts¹. But if one should describe the winter that killed even the birds, all intolerable as it was rendered by the snows of Ida; or the heat, when at noon the sea without a wave sank to rest on its unruffled couch—— yet why should I grieve at these remembrances? Our toils are past; aye, and the thought of ever arising again hath past, too, to the

(1) “Potter would have done well not to have attacked Heath’s version of this passage, which is quite correct: *τίθεται οὐθηπον τρίχα*, ‘making our hair like the shag of wild beasts.’ Where in these words can he find the shadow of his own version, ‘Shrouded ill in shaggy coverings?’”—SYMMONS.

slain. But why is it necessary that the living should sum up the numbers of those that have perished, and grieve for the chances of wayward fortune ? I myself think it right to bid a long farewell to miseries. To us, the survivors of the Argive host, the gain preponderates, and the loss is light in the scale; so that we may justly, after winging our way beyond sea and land, boast to this light of the sun: " The banded warriors of the Argives having taken Troy, have hung on high these spoils to the Gods of Greece, a glittering offering to their ancient temples !" It befits all who hear this boast to speak nobly of the city and its rulers; and the favour of Jove, that hath granted this completion, shall be duly honoured. You have heard me out.

CHORUS.—Persuaded of the truth of your words, I do not refuse my assent; for the being open to instruction is a principle that is always vigorous in the old. But it is reasonable that these tidings should chiefly excite the concern of this house and of Clytemnestra, and at the same time should enrich my happiness.

CLYTEM.—I long since raised the shout through joy, when the first messenger of flame appeared through the darkness to proclaim the capture and destruction of Troy: and some one, chiding me, said: " Persuaded by beacons, do you think that Troy hath now been sacked ? How like a woman, to be thus transported in mind !" According to these remarks, I appeared to be deceived: but still I offered the sacrifice, and with the female strain, each in different quarters through the city, raised on high the shout of joy, giving voice to its glad acclaim, as they lulled to sleep¹ in the temples of the Gods the fragrant flame amid the consuming incense. But now what need is there for you to narrate more to me ? I shall hear the whole account from the king himself. And I shall hasten to receive with most fitting welcome my revered lord on his return. For what day can be more grateful for a woman to behold, than that

(1) " Rectè Butlerus vidit, κοιμῶντες à participio εὐφημοῦντες pendere, ut sermo sit de acclamationibus in fine sacrificii fieri solitis: *acclamabant extinguentes flammarum.*"—WELLAUER.

when she opens the gate to her husband whom the Gods have preserved from the war ? Bear back this message to my lord ; That he come as quickly as possible, being eagerly desired by the city ; and, on his arrival, that he will find in his palace a faithful wife, such even as he left, the watch-dog of his house, true to him, hostile to his enemies, and the same in every thing else, having broke no seal¹ of what was entrusted to her in all this length of time. Nor have I known the pleasure, nor the slanderous reproach of another's embrace, more than the metal from the mine the stain of the tincture².

(1) "In this message to her husband, Clytemnestra, according to the usage of those simple times, reports to him that she had not broken *one* seal in his house, though he had been so long away. It appears to have been the custom of the ancient Greek ladies (and a very good custom it was) to send to their husbands at a distance these comforting assurances, that housewifery had not suffered in their absence, that their strong box had not been broken open, nor their cellars entered. Potter, however, and Schütz (which is more surprising, for Schütz is the very best interpreter of Æschylus), disdaining such humbleness, figures away with expressions about the seal of constancy, giving her words a metaphorical meaning. I am surprised that any scholar should so render *σημαντήριον*, limited by the word *ώδει*, '*I have not broken one seal.*' How can such an expression refer to a seal of constancy ? Were there, then, many seals of constancy ? The trespass in such a case must be one and indivisible ; whereas she might have broken open his strong box, and yet not entered his cellar. Had the poet intended that sense, he would have said *σημαντήριον εύηντις*, or some such phrase." SYMMONS.—"Variis modis profecti de castitate conjugali prospiciebant, ne violatio lateret. Vide quae Michaëlis ad jus Mosaicum de signis virginitatis et passim ad Prophetas subtiliter disputavit." JO. MÜLLER.—Mr. Symmons has not taken notice of this quaint opinion ; but his objections to the interpretation of *σημαντήριον* in a metaphorical sense are still more strongly conclusive against it as a literal seal of constancy. In the able note, of which we have given an abridgment above, the reader will observe a parenthesis dedicated to the praise of Schütz. We are surprised at this, both because we consider the opinions of that critic as a melancholy display of human absurdity, and because Mr. Symmons himself almost invariably condemns them : witness his last note, and the following, which we transcribe from the same page.

(2) "Potter has rendered this, '*More than the virgin metal in the mines knows an adulterate and debasing mixture.*' See his note, in which he confesses

HERALD.—Such a boast, being replete with truth, is not dishonourable for a noble dame to utter.

CHORUS.—She indeed has thus spoken for your information, in clear words that speciously interpret her meaning. But do you tell me, herald, for I wish to ask of Menelaus, if he will come with you in safe return to his home, the beloved monarch of this land ?

HERALD.—It is impossible that I should state a specious falsehood, so that my friends could for any length of time enjoy the delusion.

CHORUS.—But how can you be able to say what is both good and true ? for these qualities were very obviously disjoined by you.

HERALD.—That leader has disappeared from the Achæan host, both he and his ship. I tell what is true.

CHORUS.—Whether having sailed out in your sight from Troy ? or did some storm, distressing all the fleet, force him to part company ?

HERALD.—You have hit the mark, like a skilful archer ; and have briefly included in your words no small compass of suffering.

CHORUS.—Whether was it currently reported among the other mariners that he was dead or alive ?

HERALD.—No one knows so as clearly to declare of this, except the sun that supplies fertility to the earth.

CHORUS.—But how do you relate that this storm, sent on our naval armament by the wrath of the Gods, arose and subsided ?

HERALD.—It is not fitting to sully this auspicious day with the words of evil tidings : the honour of the Gods forbids. But when a messenger with gloomy look brings

fesses himself doubtful, and acknowledges his guide, Pauw, to be at a loss. Dr. Blomfield seems also a little puzzled ; but, at any rate, does right in condemning Schütz's rendering *χαλκοῦ βαφδεῖ*, 'vulnera ære facta.' Dr. Butler and Abreschius are clearly right in rendering it 'tinctura æris,' 'the dyeing of metals ;' a proverbial expression, to signify 'a thing impossible or out of the question,' dyeing being a process peculiar to wool, and inapplicable to metals."—SYMMONS.

home the unwelcome tidings of the ruin and fall of an army, telling that one general wound has befallen the city, and that many of her citizens have been sacrificed from many houses by the double scourge which Mars loves, the twin furies of battle, the yoke he harnesses for blood, then were it fitting that, freighted with so many calamities, he should utter this pæan of the Furies: but coming to a city rejoicing in prosperity, the welcome messenger of safety and success, how shall I mingle the happy with the sad, relating the tempest that assailed the Achæans, not without the wrath of Heaven? For elements formerly most hostile, fire and water, conspired together, and gave proof of their fidelity, by destroying the wretched host of the Argives. In the night awoke the terrors of the troubled deep; for the Thracian blasts dashed the ships against each other; and many, lashed furiously by the whirlwind of the storm and the beatings of the whelming surge, were driven away from view, beneath the uncertain guidance of a dangerous shepherd¹. And when the bright light of the sun returned, we see the dead bodies of the Achæan mariners, and the wrecks of their ships, strewing, thick as fallen blossoms, the waves of the Ægean. But some one either secretly withdrew from the danger, or interceded to save, both us and our ship, with her timbers unstrained: some God it must have been, and no mortal, that laid hold of the helm: and Fortune, our preserver, sat directing our course, so that neither in the anchorage was the ship exposed to the fury of the waves, nor yet was stranded on the rugged shore. Having, then, escaped a watery grave, yet scarce believing our good fortune, through the serene day we ruminated sadly on the recent disaster, all our comrades having suffered from it, and having been miserably wrecked. And now, if any of them be alive, they speak of us as dead—why not? and we deem of them as subject to this fate. But may the event be for the best! Expect, then, first, and most certainly, that

(1) “Πομην μακός hic est ipsa tempestas.”—PAUW.

Menelaus will come: for if any beam of the sun discovers him still living, and looking on the light, preserved by the contrivances of Jove, who is yet unwilling to extirpate the race, there is hope that he will return to his home. Having heard thus much, know that you have heard the truth.

CHORUS.—Who was it that thus in every respect so truly marked with her name (was it not some one, whom we see not, directing though in a chance circumstance his tongue with a prescience of the future ?) Hellen the bride of the spear and the cause of contention ? since, in accordance with her name, a Hell¹ to ships, to men, and to cities, she sailed from her silk-enwoven bower before the gales of earth-born Zephyr²; and many were the mail-clad warriors, pursuing on the viewless track of her oars, that moored their barks by the green-wood banks of Simois, thirsting for the bloody strife. And vengeance, consummating its purpose, brought on Ilion an alliance, rightly named from grief, exacting punishment, though late, for the dishonour done to the hospitable board, and to Jove the guardian of the

(1) “ Helena, in allusion to her name, is here called Helenas, Hellandros, Helepolis, *the destroyer of ships, the destroyer of men, the destroyer of cities*. A translator in such a case can only catch the general idea: if he retains the particular one, the fallen star becomes only a cold jelly.” POTTER. Notwithstanding this opinion, we have endeavoured to follow the turn of the original; and have expressed it by a word with which Mr. Potter may connect some idea of a fallen star, but in which he will not find much of his cold jelly. Mr. Symmons, in alluding to the play upon words which we constantly meet with in the Greek Tragedians, has finely remarked: “ It may at first excite our surprise that these writers, who so religiously abstain from any mixture of comedy or buffoonery, should in this solitary instance have affected what we should call punning. But a nearer view of the subject will teach us that they intended nothing jocular; and that they had in view the doctrines of some mysterious and Pythagorean philosophy, which inculcated that the giving of names, indicative of the destiny of individuals, was a matter of predestination. Plato, in his Cratylus, full of false and fanciful etymologies, dwells largely and gravely on this subject.”

(2) Zephyr was the son of Aurora, and of Astræus, a descendant of the Titans.

host, who horribly avenged the nuptial song in honour of the bridegroom, which it then fell to the lot of his brothers to sing. But the aged city of Priam, learning another strain, now laments with deepest groans, arraigning Paris the polluter of the bed, and having for long before endured a wretched existence on account of the cruel slaughter of her citizens. Thus has a man reared for the bane of his house a lion just weaned from the milk, yet still loving the teat, gentle in the outset of life, the playmate of the children, and even a favourite with the old: and oftentimes he was caressed in their arms like a nursling babe, coming with pleased look to the hand, and fawning in the necessities of hunger. But as he became older, he shewed the disposition he had inherited from his parents; for requiting the debt of his nurture, he prepared an unbidden banquet on the mangled limbs of the slaughtered sheep, and the house was dabbled with blood—an unconquerable torment to the inmates of the dwelling, and a mighty pest that spread wide havoc! But by the decree of Heaven he was reared in the house, as a high-priest for these calamitous rites. In the same way I would say that there came to the city of Ilion the spirit of breathless calm, wealth's imaged form of beauty with noiseless tread, softly aiming, in sidelong glances from the eye, the flowery shafts of love, to wound the bleeding heart: but in the end she brought a bitter close to the nuptials, having come an evil inmate and fatal associate to the children of Priam, sent by Jove the protector of the host to prove a fiend in the woe of that wedlock¹. There has long been celebrated among mortals

(1) Mr. Symmons has translated this beautiful passage with considerable power and richness of expression:—

“ When first she came to Ilion’s towers,
 O what a glorious sight, I ween, was there!
 The tranquil beauty of the gorgeous queen
 Hung soft as breathless summer on her cheeks,
 Where on the damask sweet the glowing zephyr slept;
 And like an idol beaming from its shrine,
 So o’er the floating gold around her thrown
 Her peerless face did shine;

And

an ancient proverb, That the high and perfect happiness of a man gives birth to a future progeny, nor dies barren of descent; but that from mere good fortune intolerable calamity arises for the race. Now, in this I vary in my sentiments from others; for it is only the impious deed that afterwards engenders more resembling the origin which they own, while it is the lot of those houses that swerve not from justice to be ever blessed with a fair succession. Insolence indeed, of an ancient date, is wont again to beget insolence, springing up afresh in the ills of mortals, either now or then, whensoever its hour shall have come; and that new insolence gives birth to an invincible fiend, abhorred by the light, even the accursed and fearless Power of Ruin descending darkly on the abodes of men, all hideous as its parents. But Justice sheds her light in the smoke-obscured cottage, and honours the righteous life; while, leaving with averted eyes mere tinselly goods acquired with pollution of the hand, she approaches what is holy, having no regard for the power of wealth that is falsely stamped with praise: and every event she directs to its completion.

Come then, O King, destroyer of the city of Troy, son of Atreus! how shall I salute thee? how shall I pay thee my homage, neither exceeding, nor yet falling short of, the measure of grateful feeling? There are many among men who prefer the appearance of justice, while they transgress

And though sweet softness hung upon their lids,
Yet her young eyes still wounded where they look'd.
She breathed an incense like Love's perfumed flower,
Blushing in sweetness; so she seemed in hue,
And pained mortal eyes with her transcendent view:
E'en so to Paris' bed the lovely Helen came.
But dark Erinnys, in the nuptial hour,
Rose in the midst of all that bridal pomp,
Seated midst the feasting throng,
Amidst the revelry and song;
Erinnys, led by Xenius Jove,
Into the halls of Priam's sons,
Erinnys of the mournful bower,
Where youthful brides weep sad in midnight hour."

its laws: and every one is ready to lend his groans to the man who is in distress, but the real smart of grief does not reach to their hearts: in like manner they rejoice with others in their joy, assuming the same expression, and forcing their countenances that refuse the smile. But whosoever is a good discerner of his flock, it is impossible that the countenance of a man, which merely seems from a friendly regard to fawn on him with a diluted friendship, should deceive his observation. But you, indeed, at the time when you led forth the expedition on account of Hellen (for I will not conceal it) were represented in my mind in very harsh colours, as not directing aright the helm of your thoughts, in forcing an unwilling hardihood on men who marched to death. But now, from the bottom of my heart, nor with aught but the feelings of friendship, I glow with warm regard for those who have gloriously crowned their toils. In time you will learn, by inquiry, which of your people have kept watch over the city with justice, and which have transgressed it.

AGAMEMNON.

First of all, it is right that I should salute Argos¹ and the Gods of the country, the joint causes of my return, and of the just vengeance which I exacted from the city of Priam. For the Gods hearing the question in truth, and not as pleaded by the tongue, without hesitation placed their votes for the destruction of Troy and its people in the urn of blood; and Hope went up in vain to the opposite urn, which was not filled by the hand. The city even now gives clear token of its capture by the smoke; the tempest of ruin is not yet spent; and the dying ashes send up rich clouds of consuming wealth. On account of this success we ought to pay the tribute of lasting gratitude to the Gods, since we have effected a matchless snare; and to avenge a woman, the Argive monster hath laid the city in

(1) “ Tandem revertor sospes ad patrios lares.
O chara salve terra! tibi tot barbaræ
Dedere gentes spolia: tibi felix diù
Potentis Asie Troja summisit manus.” *Sen. Agam.* 782.

the dust; our warriors lightly brandishing their shields as they issued from the horse which leaped¹ within the walls, about the setting of the Pleiades. The ravening lion, having bounded over the towers, lapped, till he was glutted, the blood of princes. To the Gods I have extended this prelude; but with respect to what you said of your sentiments, I remember to have heard it, and I coincide with you in the same, and grant you my full accord: for in few of men is there implanted the virtue of honouring without envy the prosperity of a friend; since a malignant poison rankling in the heart loads with a double burden the victim of its infection; and he is both oppressed with his own misfortunes, and groans as he beholds the happiness of his neighbour. From my experience I would affirm, and I well have proved their intercourse, that they who formerly appeared my warmest friends were only like the image on the mirror—the shadow of a shade. Ulysses, who sailed against his will, alone lent me any ready aid in the harness of the yoke, whether I vouch this for him dead or alive. As to what remains concerning the city and the Gods, having instituted public debate in the full assembly, we will resolve ourselves; and counsel must be taken that all that now is well may long continue the same; while, if in any case there be need of healing medicine, we will endeavour, by applying cautery or incision with kind intention, to avert the evils of the malady. But now advancing to my palace and the hearth of my home, I will first salute the Gods, who having sent me to a distant clime now grant my return; and may Victory, since she hath so far attended our steps, surely abide with us!

CLYTEM.—Men of this city, ye senators of Argos²! I will

(1) “Cùm fatalis equus saltū super ardua venit
Pergama.”—*Virg. En. VI. 515.*

(2) “According to the simplicity of ancient manners, Clytemnestra should have waited to receive her husband in the house; but her affected fondness led her to disregard decorum. Nothing can be conceived more artful than her speech; but that very art shews that her heart had little share in it: her pretended sufferings during his absence are touched with great delicacy and tenderness; but had they been real, she would not have stopped

not be ashamed to disclose before you my conjugal affection ; for by long intercourse, bashful timidity diminishes in the human breast. Not being taught by others, I will from my own experience recount the hardships of my life, endured for so long a time, as he was warring beneath the walls of Troy. In the first place, it is no light evil for a woman to sit in solitude at home, bereft of her husband, hearing many afflictiong reports ; and that one messenger should come, and that another should follow with tidings of ill even worse than the first, announcing them to the house¹. If my lord here had met with as many wounds as rumour told through various channels at home, he had been perforated, if I may so say, even more than a net ; and if he had died as oft as the thickening reports told, he might have boasted, that, like a second Geryon with three bodies, he had received while on the earth (for I talk not of the

stopped him here with the querulous recital: the joy for his return, had she felt that joy, would have broke out first : this is deferred to the latter part of her address ; there, indeed, she has amassed every image expressive of welcome ; but her solicitude to assemble these leads her beyond nature, which expresses her strongest passions in broken sentences, and with a nervous brevity, not with the cold formality of a set harangue. Her last words are another instance of the double sense which expresses reverence to her husband, but intends the bloody design with which her soul was agitated.”—POTTER.

(1) “Nothing can be plainer: one messenger comes; another after him brings in the tidings of bad news, worse than the bad (brought in by the first): *λασκόντας*, of course, applies to both. How Dr. Blomfield can separate *τὸν μὲν* from *ἡγεμόνη*, and *τὸν δὲ* from *ἐπεισφέρειν*, I cannot conceive ; nor how he can be satisfied with the sense arising from such punctuation. What? would Clytemnestra tell her husband to his face, in a studied and affected recital of her unhappiness during his absence, that one of her causes of misery was the arrival of a messenger with news that *he* was coming?—a strange compliment, or rather piece of sincerity, to escape her lips! And again, of another messenger’s arriving with news that Cassandra was coming: a most strange and injudicious topic to select for one like Clytemnestra, even had it been possible for her to have heard of it: but the poet has made it impossible, by representing the return of Agamemnon to have taken place *instantly* on the taking of Troy; and it is well known that Cassandra did not fall into his possession till that event.”

—SYMMONS.

grave) an ample triple coil of clay, dying once in each form¹. On account of these melancholy rumours the hands of others have often loosed the nooses suspended from above around my neck, which was thus by force frustrated of its intention. In consequence of this, your son Orestes, the pledge of our faithful loves, is not here, as were fitting, by my side. But be not surprised at this; for a faithful friend acquired in war is attending to his nurture, Strophius the Phocian, who predicted to me many dubious calamities, both in your danger beneath the walls of Troy, and if the anarchy of the turbulent people should overthrow the Senate²; as it is natural for men to trample the more on the

(1) “Geryon was a king of Spain killed by Hercules, fabled to have had three bodies. Clytemnestra compares her husband to this giant; and says, that if he had been slain as often as reported, this second triple Geryon (meaning Agamemnon under that name, for it were ominous to talk of the dead) might well boast to have received his triple vest, meaning his three bodies, and to have died once in each shape.” POTTER.

—“Dr. Blomfield has vitiated this passage, by a wrong punctuation and interpretation: *χλαῖνα τρίμοιρος* must mean the body of the giant, and can by no means be understood of the earth which covered him. To talk of a *three-fated* vest of earth, meaning a sepulchre, would, in English, be rank nonsense; and I am afraid that *χθονὸς τρίμοιρον χλαῖναν*, so construed, would deserve no better name in Greek. Besides, in matter of taste, can any thing be more frigid than this interment of the giant? for the critic not only buries him, but calculates with mathematical precision the quantity of earth that it took to cover him, without reckoning the quantity that lay under him.” SYMONDS.—“Sensus hic esse debet: *Si verò tot mortes obiisset, quot multiplicabant rumores, posset, tanquam alter Geryon tricorpor, sæpiùs sibi triplex in terrâ (nam quod sub terrâ est Geryonis corpus, non dico) corpus contigisse gloriari.* Quod verò addit, se non de tricorpore umbrâ Geryonis loqui, quæ apud inferos sit, id non otiosum est, sed ad invidiam removendam et ad sustentandam eam, quam præ se fert, amoris speciem, comparatum. Quum enim Agamemnonem cum Geryone compararet, fieri possit, ut aliquis de Geryone apud inferos habitante cogitet eumque cum Agamemnōne mortuo conferat, quarè subjicit: longè absit, ut de Agamemnōne mortuo loquar.” WELLAUER.

(2) “This I contend, with Stanley, Schütz, and Butler, to mean ‘overthrowing the Senate or Council of State.’ Who ever heard that *Βουλὴ καταρρίπτειν* meant ‘concilium inire’? As to the anachronism of a Senate at Argos in those days, it is notorious that the Attic Tragedians committed many of the same description, applying to the times of the Trojan War

the

fallen. Such a pretext, indeed, bears with it no guile. The gushing fountains of my tears have in fact become dry, nor is there a drop left; and I have dimmed my eyes by late watchings, gazing through their tears for the beacon that never told thy return. Even in my dreams I was startled by the gnat as it whizzed by me on light wings, seeing more calamities befall you than were commensurate with the time passed in slumber. Now, after having endured all these woes in my mourning breast, I would say of this man, that he was the watch-dog of the fold, the cable by which the ship rides through the storm, the shafted pillar of the lofty roof, a child whose father hath but one, the land when first descried by the despairing mariner, the day breaking gladly on the sight after the night of storm, and the fountain stream gushing to the parched traveller. Welcome is the escape from all hard constraint. Of such salutation I account him worthy; and let it produce no offence, for I have formerly endured many evils. But now I pray thee, my dear lord, descend from this chariot, not placing on the ground, O king, thy foot which laid Ilion low. Why do ye delay, ye maidens, to whom the office was commanded of strewing with tapestry the surface of his path? Let the way of entrance be instantly covered with purple, that Justice may lead him into an unexpected abode. As to what remains, my anxious thought, not overcome with sleep, shall, with the assistance of the Gods, execute justly the decrees of fate.

AGAM.—O daughter of Leda, guardian of my house, you have spoken in a manner corresponding to my absence; for you have extended your words to a great length. But praise, to be becoming, must be an honour proceeding from others. And besides, do not soothe me with adulation, as though I were a woman; nor, like a barbaric slave prostrate

the language and customs, &c. of their own time. But why might not Æschylus imagine a *βουλὴ γερόντων*, to assist Clytemnestra in the cares of government? and do not the Chorus, in the opening of the play, consider themselves in that light, calling themselves *ἀνδρες γαῖας μονόφρουροι ἵρκος?*—SYMMONS.

on the ground before me, open the mouth with eager clamour ; nor, having strewed the garments for my feet, make my path obnoxious to the envy of Heaven. We ought to honour the Gods with such gifts ; and for me, who am a mortal, to tread on these embroidered robes of beauty, is a daring I cannot contemplate without fear. I bid you honour me as a man, not as a God. Without tapestry for the feet or the embroidered woof, Fame proclaims my glory : and the absence of presumptuous thoughts is the greatest gift of the Gods. The man whom alone we must pronounce happy is he who ends his life in sweet prosperity : and would that I may thus in every thing conduct myself without arrogance !

CLYTEM.—And yet do not say so to thwart my purpose.

AGAM.—Be assured, indeed, that I will not yield my purpose.

CLYTEM.—Had you been in fear, you would have vowed to the Gods to do this.

AGAM.—I clearly knowing, if ever any man did, have pronounced my final determination.

CLYTEM.—What do you think that Priam would have done, if he had achieved this victory ?

AGAM.—I think that he would have undoubtedly trodden on the tapestry.

CLYTEM.—Do not you, then, regard the blame of men.

AGAM.—The rumours muttered among a people have, however, great power.

CLYTEM.—The man who is not envied is surely not the object of admiration.

AGAM.—It is not the part of a woman to be desirous of contention.

CLYTEM.—But it is becoming those who are in high prosperity to yield.

AGAM.—Do you value the triumph in this contest ?

CLYTEM.—O be persuaded, and willingly resign to me the victory !

AGAM.—I yield unwilling ; but if these things seem good to you, let some slave quickly unbind the sandals on which

my steps advance, lest, as I tread on these works of ocean's dye, some envy of the eye of Heaven glance on me from on high. Great, too, is my reluctance to waste the possessions of my palace, destroying with my feet the costly robes, the enwoven purple priced with silver. Of this enough. But with gentle feelings conduct the maid of foreign land within. Whoso tempers victory with mercy, him does the God from his throne on high regard with benignant eye. For no one with willing choice submits to the yoke of slavery; and she, the choicest flower of countless wealth, gift of the host, hath followed in my train. But since I am forced to obey you in this request, I go within the courts of my palace, treading on the robes of purple.

CLYTEM.—There is a sea, and who shall staunch its founts? In its depths it breeds the oozing purple, ever bubbling up afresh, costly as silver, dye of the robe; and there exists, O king, by the blessing of the Gods, the possession of these treasures in our palace. Poverty is a stranger to its halls. Many a vest for the tread of your foot would I have vowed, had it previously been announced to the house in oracles that I should thus work a charm to win back your life. For while the root remains, the foliage spreads over the house, extending a shade that defies the rays of the dog-star: and you having returned to the hearth of your home, you herald the approach of the summer's heat in winter; and when Jove is preparing the wine from the bitter juice of the unripe grape, then already through the house spreads a cooling temperature, the sovereign's self making its home his haunt. Jove, O Jove, that givest consummation to every thing, consummate these my prayers; and be those things to thee a care which thou art now on the eve of consummating!

CHORUS.—Why does this terror, incessantly dwelling in my presence, hover before my boding heart? and why that strain, unbidden and unbribed, sound its prophetic note? and why does not persuasive confidence, rejecting this dread, like mysterious dreams, take its seat on the grateful throne of my mind? But time hath elapsed since its influence

wasted the barks fastened to the shore by the ligature of the cables, at the time when our naval bands rushed beneath the walls of Troy. And I learn their return from my own eyes, being a present witness of its certainty ; yet still my mind, obeying its own internal impulse, awakes without the lyre the dirge of Erinnys, not entertaining all the sweet confidence of hope. And my heart within my breast is, not without cause, tossed in the eddies of care, in consequence of my just presages that will certainly reach their completion. But I pray that, contrary to my expectation, they may prove false, so as never to come to pass. For surely the extreme of high health is not exempt from danger ; since disease plants itself as a neighbour within the next wall ; and the fortune of a man, even while proceeding in the fairest course, is wont to strike on the hidden rock. Still, when a provident fear hath cast overboard from a moderate sling a part of the wealthy freight, the whole fortunes of the house have not sunk, being too deeply laden with calamity, nor has its burden made the bark go down. Oft, too, have the ample gifts from the bounty of Jove and the harvest of the year banished the pest of famine. But the dark life-blood of man, which hath once fallen on the ground before him, who shall by incantation again recall ? Had it been permitted, Jove would not have checked him whose unerring knowledge could restore souls to light with indemnity to the dead¹. But did not fate, a fate ordained by the Gods, prohibit me from declaring more, my heart, anticipating my tongue, would pour forth all. Now in darkness it murmurs, grieving in its thoughts, and never expecting that it will unravel any of these mysteries in time to save, although my soul is consumed with the burning anguish which they impart.

(1) "Sensus h̄ic est : *Neque, si Dii vellent mortuos reviviscere, Jupiter eum qui rem b̄nē perspectam habet (Æsculapium), prohibuisset, quominus mortuorum aliquem ad integritatem reduceret.*" WELLAUER. Æsculapius was tempted by a costly bribe to display the triumph of his art by restoring Hippolytus to life ; but Jupiter, indignant at this violation of his laws, slew with the same thunderbolt the presumptuous physician and unlucky patient.

CLYTEM.—Do you also (I mean Cassandra) betake yourself within; since Jove has leniently placed you in this house, to share in the sacred lavations, along with many slaves stationed beside the household altar. Descend from this chariot, and be not too proud for your fortunes; for they say that even the son of Alcmena¹ once submitted to be sold to bondage, and to stoop by force to the yoke. But if, then, the necessity of this condition befall any one, they have much reason to be thankful who meet with masters in the possession of hereditary² wealth: for they who unexpectedly have reaped the harvest of success are harsh in all things to their slaves, and obey not the rule of right. With us you will have all those privileges that are usual and just.

CHORUS.—To you having addressed these clear words, she now pauses: and being within the toils of fate, you will surely, if you may, comply: but perchance you may be inclined to refuse.

CLYTEM.—Why if she have not, like the swallow, accents barbarous and unintelligible, speaking within her comprehension I must persuade her by my words.

CHORUS.—Follow her: she advises what in your present circumstances is best. Be persuaded then, and leave the seat of the chariot.

CLYTEM.—I have not leisure to delay longer beside this stranger at the gates; for already are the sheep placed by the central altar for the blazing sacrifice, a token of thanksgiving from us who never expected to enjoy this delight. But do you, if you will do any of these things, no longer delay: but if through ignorance you understand not my

(1) Hercules was condemned by Jupiter to serve Omphale queen of Lydia for the space of a year, as a punishment for the cowardly stratagem by which he murdered Iphitus.

(2) “ *Poëtæ sententiam clarissimè prosecutur Philosophus, Rhetoric. II. 32. Διαφέρει δὲ τοῖς νεωστὶ κεκτημένοις, καὶ τοῖς πάλαι τὰ ίθη τῷ ἀπαντα μᾶλλον καὶ φαιλότερα τὰ κακά ἔχειν τοὺς νεοπλούντους· ὅσπερ γέρας πταιθεντία πλούτου δοτὶ, τὸ νεόπλουτον εἶναι.* ”—STANLEY.

words, do you, in place of speech, reply to me in signs with your barbaric hand!

CHORUS.—The stranger maid appears to require a clear interpreter. Her manner is like that of some wild beast, when newly caught.

CLYTEM.—Surely she is mad, and obeys a distempered fancy, having come from the recent sack of her native city; and she knows not how to endure the bit, before she have spent her fury in bloody foam. But I will not submit to be dishonoured by casting away more words.

CHORUS.—But I (for I pity her¹) will not be angry. Come, O unhappy maid! forsake this chariot, and, yielding to necessity, endure the first trial of the yoke.

CASSANDRA.

Alas and alas! O Gods! O Earth! O Apollo! O Apollo!

CHORUS.—Why hast thou uttered alas along with the name of Loxias? For he is not such a God as should be invoked by the mourner².

CASS.—Alas and alas! O Gods! O Earth! O Apollo! O Apollo!

CHORUS.—She again with words of evil omen calls on the God to whom it in nought belongs to be present at lamentations.

(1) This speech of Clytemnestra affords the most perfect specimen which we know of a classical *bull*; nor does the attempted explanation of Dr. Blomfield in the least remove the absurdity.

(2) “The Chorus, as it became them, express themselves with tenderness and humanity to the unhappy princess: this introduces a scene, the finest perhaps that tragedy has yet known. It would be an affront to the understanding of the reader to point out the nice gradation of the prophetic fury; and that heart must be hard indeed which does not feel the pathos.”—POTTER.

(3) “So Callimachus beautifully makes even the mourning of Thetis for her son stop, when the hymns of Apollo were heard:

Οὐδὲ Θέτις Ἀχιλλῆα κινύρεται αἴλινα μάτηρ,
‘Οπηπότ’ οὐ παῖδον, οὐ παῖδον δκούσηρ.

In the next line the poet plays upon the meaning of the word Apollo. Plato, in Cratylus, gives the same etymology from *ἀπολλύω*, which I could not preserve in English.”—SYMMONS.

CASS.—Apollo! Apollo! Agyieus my guide¹! Apollo my destroyer! for thou hast a second time utterly destroyed me.

CHORUS.—She seems about to prophesy concerning her own misfortunes. Inspiration, even in her chains, forsakes not her soul.

CASS.—Apollo! Apollo! Agyieus my guide! Apollo my destroyer! Ah! whither hast thou been my guide? to what roof hast thou brought me?

CHORUS.—To the palace of the Atridæ. If you know not this, I tell it you; and you will not say that my words are false.

CASS.—Alas! alas! It is to a house then accursed of Heaven, conscious of many a guilty deed of murder by kindred hands and many a fatal noose; to a slaughter-house, where man is the victim; to a soil whose fountains are blood.

CHORUS.—The stranger seems, like a hound, to be sharp of scent, and to track the murder of those whose fate she will discover.

CASS.—Alas! alas! for I am persuaded by these proofs, the children weeping for their slaughter, and their roasted flesh on which a father fed.

CHORUS.—We have been told, by report, of your fame in prophecy; but we want not any prophets here.

CASS.—Woe! woe! What is this, ye Gods, that she is contriving? What new and mighty calamity is she preparing in the house—what evil intolerable to her friends, and desperate beyond all cure? But succour to save there is none near.

CHORUS.—I am unable to comprehend these prophecies: but I knew your former meaning, for all the city resounds with the tale.

CASS.—Alas! alas! O wretched woman! for thou art

(1) “ *Enimverò Agyiea, ut et Apollinem, inquit Cassandra, non otioso cognomine, sed etymologiam respiciens; quippe τὸ δύνεσθαι τὸν δύειν derivari videtur. Multus est in hisce allusionibus Æschylus noster, Ἀγυεῦ, inquit, ἀ ποι ποτ’ ἄγαρχος με; ita Ἀπόλλων ἐμὸς, ἀπόλλεσας γέρον.* ”—
STANLEY.

about to do the deed, after having refreshed in the bath the husband the partner of thy bed. How shall I tell the end? for this will quickly come. Lo! hand succeeding hand thrusts forth the eager blow!

CHORUS.—I do not yet understand: for now, in consequence of their double meaning, I am bewildered by your obscure oracles.

CASS.—Ha! ha! Alas! alas! what is this I see before me? Is it not some net of Hell? Yes, and the partner of his bed is that net, she the joint cause of his death. Now let the band of Furies, never sated with the blood of this race, ring forth their pæan in joy at this horrid sacrifice.

CHORUS.—What Furies are these that you call on to raise their wild scream in this house? Your words bring no gladness to my aspect; and the blood runs to my heart, changing from the red to the pale-yellow hue, such as to those who have fallen by the spear aids in extinguishing the rays of life's setting sun. But Calamity quickly approaches.

CASS.—Ha! ha! see there! see there! Keep away the Bull from the Heifer. Having entangled in the vest the black-horned Bull, she smites him with the deadly weapon, and he falls amid the waters of the bath. I tell you of the fortune of that cauldron reeking with the blood of assassination.

CHORUS.—I cannot boast to be a skilful interpreter of oracles, but I conjecture that these denote some ill. From oracles, indeed, what promise of good ever comes to mortals? The ambiguous arts of divination only force us to feel the terror of predicted evil.

CASS.—Alas! for the ill-starred fortunes of me a wretched woman! For I lament my own sufferings, adding them to mingle with his. Why hast thou brought me with all my sorrows hither? For nothing but to die along with thee—for how otherwise can it be?

CHORUS.—You are maddened with a phrensy inflicted by Heaven; and you utter concerning your own fate a strain

whose notes should be unsung; like some dusky bird, insatiate of wailing, that laments in bitter grief 'Itys,' 'Itys,' through a life that, alas, blooms but with misery—that bird the nightingale.

CASS.—Oh! would that the fate of the tuneful nightingale were mine! for the Gods have invested her with a winged form, and a life of sweet pleasures unstained by tears. But for me what remains, but the rending wound of the double-edged spear?

CHORUS.—Whence hast thou these visionary woes, bursting upon thee and maddening thee with their impulse? Why dost thou sing of such images of terror with ill-omened voice, and at the same time in high-raised strains? Whence is it that thou hast been led into those boundaries of the path of prophecy that only betoken ill?

CASS. Alas for the nuptials—the nuptials of Paris, so deadly to his friends! Alas for the streams of my native Scamander! Once was a time when I, doomed to misery, was reared to womanhood on thy banks: but now, methinks, I shall soon raise my prophetic notes beside Cocytus and the shores of Acheron.

CHORUS.—Why hast thou too clearly predicted these words? A child might read their meaning. I am struck to the heart by a mortal pang as you pour forth your plaintive strains, because of your hapless state, telling of griefs that it breaks my heart to hear.

CASS.—Alas for the sorrows, the sorrows of my native city that hath perished in utter ruin! Alas for the sacrifices with unsparing slaughter of the pasturing herds offered by my father in behalf of our towers! But no remedy availed to prevent the city from suffering all the woes under which it is now sunk; and I—my mind still glowing with inspiration—shall soon dash my dying body on the ground.

CHORUS.—You have uttered these words in consonance with your former predictions: and some spirit, urging you to thoughts of ill, and assailing you with overpowering

influence, inspires you to sing of these sad and deadly sufferings. But I vainly strive to know the issue.

CASS.—Then, in truth, the oracle shall no longer look forth from behind the veil, like some new-married bride: but it seems as if, with violent gales, it would rush to the rising of the sun, so as to dash, like the wave, with increasing flow towards the dawn of this calamity¹. But I will no longer instruct you by enigmas; and do ye bear witness to me, as I follow hard on their scent the steps of guilty deeds that were wrought of old. For there is a choir that never leaves this roof, accordant in their strains, and yet harsh to hear; for their note is not of good. And having quaffed, till their daring waxed higher, the blood of man, the band of sister Furies prolong their revel in this house, refusing to depart without. As they sit around the domes, they chaunt as their song the first fatal source² of calamity to the race; and in turn they shudder, as they name the nuptial couch of a brother bringing cruel revenge on him who invaded it. Have I erred in my aim; or, like some archer's, has my arrow reached the prey? Or am I false in my oracles, a strolling babbler of lies? Bear me witness, by the pledge of an oath, that I have shewn in my words a true knowledge of the ancient crimes of these abodes.

CHORUS.—And how, in such circumstances, could the sanction of an oath, though accorded without guile, have any healing power? But I wonder that you, who have

(1) The beauty of this image can only be properly appreciated by those who have observed the extraordinary way in which the waves of the sea appear to rush towards the rising sun. The commentators are all wide of the proper meaning of the passage.

(2) This is generally referred to the adultery of Thystes with Aërope, his brother's wife; but we are rather inclined to suppose, with Heath, that the crime indicated was the treacherous murder of Myrtillus by Pelops, from which flowed the discord of his sons, and, in fact, all the calamities of the devoted race. Cassandra, in the end of this speech, uses the plural *duaprias*, and must therefore be presumed to have before alluded to more than one transgression in the strain which she ascribes to the Furies.

spent your life beyond the sea, in a city whose language is not ours, should speak of these events as if you had been present at their occurrence.

CASS.—The prophet Apollo appointed me to this office.

CHORUS.—Was it because, even though a God, he owned the power of love?

CASS.—Before this time I felt ashamed to tell it.

CHORUS.—That was because every one when in prosperity is so fastidious.

CASS.—Well, he struggled for my affections, and inspired in me too deeply the raptures of love.

CHORUS.—Did you ever join in that embrace that brings the fruits of love?

CASS.—No; for after having promised my consent, I deceived the God.

CHORUS.—Were you at that time possessed by the power of inspiration?

CASS.—I had already foretold all their calamities to my countrymen.

CHORUS.—How then were you unpunished by the wrath of Apollo?

CASS.—I persuaded no one of aught I said from the time that I committed this offence.

CHORUS.—To us, however, you appear to predict what is worthy of belief.

CASS.—Io! Io! Alas! Alas what woes! Again the fearful pains of inspired prophecy labour in my breast, wildly disturbing it with oracular preludes. See ye these infants that are seated on the roofs, resembling the phantoms of dreams? They are children who were slain by those who should have loved them, bearing their hands filled with the food of their own flesh; and you may mark them holding up their entrails and their bowels, a horrid repast on which a father fed. In consequence of these deeds, I declare that a certain unwarlike lion, wallowing, while left to guard the house, in a wanton bed, is plotting revenge, ah me! against my master on his return. My master? Yes, for I am forced to bear the yoke of slavery. He, the leader of

the fleet, and the destroyer of Ilium, knows not what the tongue of that hateful bitch, after having spoken and prolonged its words with the semblance of joy, will, like some hidden Fiend, prepare for his disastrous fate. Such are the deeds she dares: a female is the slayer of the male. Calling her what loathsome monster shall I name her aright—an amphisbæna, or a Scylla that dwells amid the rocks for the destruction of the mariner, the raving dam of Hell, a Fury breathing against her friends the implacable rage of war? How in her fearless audacity did she raise the shout of triumph over him, as if in the moment when the battle gives way! But she appears to rejoice in his safe return. And if I fail to persuade you of what I have declared, it is all one. For why? that which must be, will come; and you, ere long, being present, will say of me with pity, that I was too true a prophetess.

CHORUS.—Of the banquet of Thyestes on the flesh of his children I have heard, and shuddered to hear; and fear seizes me as I now listen to that which bears no slight resemblance to the truth. But as to the rest which I heard, I run bewildered astray from the course.

CASS.—I say, that you shall see the death of Agamemnon.

CHORUS.—O wretched woman! lull your ill-omened tongue to silence.

CASS.—Why? since there is no healing power to controul what I have foretold.

CHORUS.—Not if it shall take place: but may Heaven in some way avert it!

CASS.—You indeed offer your prayers, but they are intent on the murder.

CHORUS.—By what man is this execrable deed projected?

CASS.—Have you glanced so far wide of the meaning of my oracles?

CHORUS.—For I have not understood the device of the assassin.

CASS.—And yet you know full well the Grecian tongue.

CHORUS.—The oracles of Apollo, too, are in Greek, and yet they are hard to be understood.

CASS.—Alas! what a flame! and is it rushing on me? Alas! Alas! O Lycaeum Apollo! Ah me! Ah me! She, the biped lioness, that bedded with the wolf in the absence of the generous lion, will slay me, a wretched victim; and, like one who prepares a poison, she will add to the phial of her wrath the reward of his love for me. She vaunts, as she whets the sword against her husband, that she will make him atone with his life for having brought me hither. Why then do I retain the mockery of these ornaments¹, the wand, and the wreaths of a prophetess around my neck? I will yet work your destruction before my own death. Away with ye, and perish! dashed at least to earth by my hands: thus will I requite you. Enrich with your baneful gifts some other votary, in place of me. And lo! Apollo himself disrobing me of my prophetic garb! And thou couldst, unmoved, behold me derided even in these ornaments, derided among my friends, and in no dubious way by my enemies. But called a mad stroller, like some conjuress, poor, wretched, and perishing with hunger, I endured it all. And now the prophet, divesting me of the honours of his Prophetess, hath led me into these fatal circumstances; and in place of the altar at which my father fell, the block awaits me, to perish by the death-wound amid my reeking gore. But we shall not die, however, unrevenged by the Gods: for again shall there come another, to exact retribution for our fate—a son, to slay his mother, and be the avenger of his father. He, a wandering exile, long estranged from the land, returns to complete the

(1) “Quandò sunt morituri, omnia priùs ornamenta et officii sui insignia, ne hoc habitu moriantur abjecere facit Æschylus. Similia pœnè de Amphiarao vate jam jam absorbendo canit Statius Papinius, extremo septimo:

Audio jam rapidæ cursum Stygis atraque Ditis
Flumina, tergeminosque mali custodis hiatus.
Accipe commissum capiti decus, accipe lauros,
Quas Erebo deferre nefas: nunc voce supremâ
Deceptum tibi, Phœbe larem, poenasque nefandæ
Conjugis et pulchrum nati commendo furorem.

Euripides quoque Troad. hujus rei dederat exemplum.”—CANTER. Nov.
Lect. III. 9.

parapet¹ of ruin for his race ; for a mighty oath hath been sworn by the Gods, that the prostrate body of his murdered father shall recall him. Yet why should I, who am but a stranger in this house, thus lament, since I have before seen the city of Ilium suffering as it suffered, and since they who dwelt within its walls have thus had their doom assigned by the judgment of the Gods ? I will go and meet my fate ; I will dare to die : and I further adjure these gates of Hades, and pray that I may meet with a well-sped blow, so that without a struggle, my life-blood flowing easily away, I may close these eyes.

CHORUS.—O maiden, exceeding in sorrows as in wisdom, you have extended your words to a long discourse : but if you know truly your own fate, how, like the steer, led by heavenly impulse to the sacrifice, do you advance so boldly to the altar ?

CASS.—There is no more escape gained, O strangers, by putting off the time.

CHORUS.—But the latest moment of time is the best.

CASS.—The fated day is come : I shall gain little by flight.

CHORUS.—But know, that you suffer from the too rash courage of your mind.

CASS.—But a glorious death is grateful to mortals.

CHORUS.—No one hears such sentiments from the happy.

CASS.—Alas ! my father, for thee and for thy high-born race !

CHORUS.—What may this mean ? What terror makes thee recoil ?

CASS.—Oh horror ! horror !

CHORUS.—Why hast thou uttered this exclamation, except there be the feelings of horror in your heart ?

CASS.—This house breathes the scent of the dripping gore of murder.

(1) “ Θρύκοι sunt domus vel muri pinnacula, sive minæ ; ita θρύκων est coronam vel fastigium adiicio imponere. Revera enim Orestes coronidem calamitatibus Pelopidarum imposuit ; facinusque ab eo patratum ultimum erat istius domus infortunium.”—HEATH.

CHORUS.—And how should such an odour arise from the sacrifices consuming on the altar?

CASS.—The vapour is like that from the charnel-house.

CHORUS.—You tell of no delight of Syrian fragrance within these walls.

CASS.—But I go to bewail, even in the house, my own fate, and that of Agamemnon. Let the period of life that hath been assigned me suffice. O strangers! I do not yield to any fruitless fear, like the bird when beset in the brake. Bear witness for me of this, when for me, a woman, shall a woman die, and for a man ill-starred in his nuptials shall fall a man. As now about to die, I will ask this friendly office at your hands.

CHORUS.—O unhappy sufferer! I pity thee on account of thy predicted fate.

CASS.—Yet once more I would utter the words or notes of my own dirge; and pray to the Sun, even to these the last of his beams I shall behold, that my avengers may wreak a like destruction on both my hateful murderers at once, in return for me who a captive die, an unresisting victim. Alas for the fortunes of mankind! In prosperity, a shadow can throw them to the ground; and should they pass through adversity, a moistened sponge at a touch effaces the impression: and I lament more for the latter evil than the former¹.

CHORUS.—It is in the nature of prosperity not to cause satiety to any of mankind; and no one excludes with re-pulse the man of note from his house, saying, Enter not here. Thus to our king the Gods have granted that he should take the city of Priam; and honoured of Heaven he

(1) It is more to be lamented that man should derive no lasting impression from adversity, than that his prosperity should be fleeting and unstable. This fine reflection of Cassandra has been grossly misunderstood by all the commentators except Schütz; whose merits, in this instance, we the more readily acknowledge, as we have been generally obliged to speak of him in terms of censure. The translation of Mr. Symmons omits all notice of the last line of the speech; and, in fact, he would have found it difficult to have reconciled it with his mistaken view of the preceding sentiment.

returns home. But now, if he shall atone for the blood previously shed by his race, and dying, in addition to the dead, shall cause the consummation of the penalties and judgments of other deaths, who of mortals, as he hears this tale, would not pray to have been born beneath the influence of a more harmless fortune ?

AGAM.—Oh me ! I am pierced ! I feel the mortal wound.

CHORUS 1.—Hush ! Who shrieks of his wound, being stabbed by a weapon thrust home ?

AGAM.—Oh me again ! I am a second time struck !

CHORUS 2.—It appears to me, from the cries of the king, that the deed has been perpetrated.

CHORUS 3.—But how shall we concert safe counsels¹ ?

CHORUS 4.—I indeed declare to you my opinion, to call on the citizens to bring assistance hither to the palace.

CHORUS 5.—But to me it appears that we ought to break in with all haste, and convict the deed, while the sword yet reeks with blood.

CHORUS 6.—I too, agreeing in the same opinion, give my vote that we bestir ourselves ; for this is not the moment for delay.

(1) Mr. Symmons has attempted an explanation, or rather justification, of this absurd scene ; in which of course he fails, with all his learning, to make his argument good. We admit the fact, that the Chorus could not leave the stage, to the assistance of Agamemnon ; but it surely was not imperative that they should talk nonsense if they stayed. Why, if all the audience knew that they could not stir from the Thymele, should they even propose to rush into the palace ? Dr. Butler has observed the incongruities of the passage, and has judiciously remarked : “ *Nihil certè verius quam senibus dilationem convenire ; sed, ut liberè loquar quid sentiam, crediderim Æschylum hoc loco non tam ejus quod personæ cuique conveniret, quam legis ex naturâ sibi impositæ studiosum fuisse. Et quod illi laudi vertunt Stanl. et Schütz, vereor ne id vitio vertendum fuerit. Quid enim frigidius, quid ipsi naturæ repugnantius, quam dum regem auxilium invocantem audiunt, Chorus quid agendum sit deliberare ? Hæc est ne senibus quidem digna cunctatio, at gemellum habes locum apud Eurip. Med. v. 1283, ubi Chorus, auditis puerorum quos Medea trucidat exclamationibus, similiter deliberat. Ortum hoc apud utrumque ex necessitate sibi impositâ ut Chorus è scenâ non exiret ; quam quidem legem cum suis laborare incommodis uterque sentiret, eam tamen contra naturæ ipsius fidem servandam sibi constituerunt.* ”

CHORUS 7.—That is evident; for they exhibit symptoms as if they would set up the ensigns of tyranny in the city.

CHORUS 8.—Because we delay; while they, treading under foot the character of delay, do not slumber in action.

CHORUS 9.—I know not what counsel I can fall upon to suggest. But we may also take some measures respecting the murderer.

CHORUS 10.—I am of the same opinion; since I am at a loss how we can by words again raise the dead to life.

CHORUS 11.—And shall we, dragging out our lives, thus yield to the polluters of this house to be our masters?

CHORUS 12.—No, it is not to be borne: it were better to die, for death is a milder fate than submission to tyranny.

CHORUS 13.—Shall we infer, by the proofs of his shrieks, that the king then has perished?

CHORUS 14.—We ought to speak of such an event from clear information; for conjecture is very different from certain knowledge.

CHORUS 15.—I am in every way much induced to accord with this opinion, to learn clearly how the son of Atreus is situated.

CLYTEM.—Many things having been before said by me to suit the time, I shall not now blush to declare the contrary. For why not? Who would not, when preparing hostile designs against enemies who seem to be friends, fence around them the toils of destruction to a height that no bound could hope to clear? But to me this strife of victory, arising from an ancient cause, and not unpremeditated of old, hath now, though late, arrived. I stood where I struck him, after the deed was done¹. And so I did it, and I will not deny it, that he could neither shun nor avert his fate. I fix around him a net without an outlet, like

(1) “ — These hands have struck the blow !
 'Tis like the deeds that have been done of yore !
 Past ! and my feet are now upon the spot !

Thus have I translated in three lines, without adding a single idea, the single line,

“Εστηκα δ' ένθ' έπαω' ἐπ' ἐξειργασμένοις.

that of fishes, the baneful splendour of the robe ; and I strike him twice, and after two groans he let sink his relaxing limbs. Then, as he lay on the ground, I inflict in addition a third wound, a votive boon to Pluto, that guards the dead below the earth. Thus having fallen, he breathes away his life ; and sending forth in gushes the bubbling blood from his death-wound, he strikes me with the dark drops of that bloody dew—me who rejoiced in it, no less than the cultured field in the sparkling shower bestowed by Heaven what time the ear bursts into life. Since this is so, ye senators of Argos, ye may rejoice if ye be disposed to joy ; for I glory in the deed. And if it were fitting to pour libations over a dead body, this would with justice have here been done. For he having filled a cup of such accursed calamities in the house, himself most justly is forced to drain it on his return.

CHORUS.—We are amazed at thee ! How audacious thou art in thy language, who boastest over the body of thy husband in terms like these !

CLYTEM.—Ye try me as if I were a woman weak in judgment ; but I, with fearless heart, say to you who know me—and whether you choose to praise or blame me it is all one—here lies Agamemnon, my husband, dead, the work of this right-hand, the executioner of justice. And these things are even so.

CHORUS.—Having tasted, O woman, what poison either of solid substance produced by the earth or liquid derived from the tides of the sea, have you invested yourself

One of the causes of the misunderstanding this line, is its brevity and its interruptions ; and the critics have not observed that it is a soliloquy, and not part of the narrative. Clytemnestra advances on the stage, firm in resolution, yet full of horror at the deed she had been committing, partly soliloquizing, partly addressing the Chorus. The line in question is a soliloquy, broken, interrupted, with long intervening pauses, and should not be printed as if it were in the plain continuity of narrative, but,

“Εστηκα δὲ θεος ἔπαιος ——— ἐπειργασμένοις ———.” SYMMONS.

This notion is altogether fanciful ; but as it is poetical, and at all events original, we have quoted it for the gratification of the reader.

with this phrensy, and with the curses murmured by the people? You have laid prostrate and slain your victim; and you shall be driven from the city, an object of violent hate to the citizens.

CLYTEM.—Now, indeed, ye doom me banishment from the city, and the hatred of the citizens, and the murmured curses of the people—ye, who offered no opposition to this man at the time when, regarding her life no more than that of one of the sheep that abounded in his fleecy pastures, he gave to the sacrifice his own child, the dearest offspring of my throes, to be a charm to soothe the blasts of Thrace. Was it not fitting that you should have driven him in exile from the land, as a punishment for this polluted deed? But hearing my deeds, you are stern in condemning them. But I tell you this—since I am prepared to threaten on equal grounds—to prescribe terms to me when you have conquered me by strength: but if the God shall decree the contrary, you shall be taught by experience, though late, the wisdom of submission.

CHORUS.—You are aspiring in your thoughts, and have spoken the words of arrogance. Your soul is still maddened, as in the midst of gore and slaughter. A spot of unavenged blood still marks your brow. It will yet be your fate, deprived of friends, to repay blow for blow.

CLYTEM.—You shall hear then this, my solemn oath: By the full vengeance I have taken for my child, by Atè and Erinnys, to whom I devoted this victim, I have no expectation to tread the courts of Fear, as long as Ægisthus shall burn a fire on my hearth, retaining towards me his former affection; for he is to me no feeble buckler of confidence. Here lies the man, the polluter of this damsel, the lavisher of his blandishments to every Chryseis beneath the walls of Troy—and here, by his side, lies the captive Prophetess, that shared his bed, his faithful sooth-saying paramour, and the common trull of the benches of the mariners. But they have not done me unrequited wrongs: for he, indeed, has thus met his fate; and she, his lover, having chaunted like a swan her last funeral dirge,

there lies low ; and to me her death hath brought the late enjoyment of my wanton couch'.

SEM.—Alas ! Would that a speedy fate, not racking with pain, nor confining to the sick-bed, would come and bring us the sleep that never ends ! our kind guardian being laid low, and having endured many trials on account of a woman—and by a woman's hand he has lost his life.

CHORUS.—Ah ! frantic Helen, that in thy single self wert the cause of many and many a life being lost beneath the walls of Troy !

SEM.—And now thou hast cut off in the flower of manhood an illustrious life by a deed of inexpiable blood, thou who wast, from the first, in the house the cause of fiercest strife and of sorrow to its lord.

CLYTEM.—Do not pray for the fate of death through grief at these events ; nor turn your wrath against Helen, that she was the destroyer of men, that having alone caused the death of many a Grecian warrior she gave birth to an incurable woe.

SEM.—O demon, whose wrath falls heavy on the house and the two descendants of Tantalus, thou hast strengthened to my sorrow in the female breast a power that equals the daring of man² ! Having taken her stand over his

(1) Blomfield has not favoured us with any interpretation of this passage, although it is decidedly one of the most obscure in the play. We are not by any means satisfied with our own translation, in which we have nearly followed that of Butler : “ *Jacet hujus amasia, et morte sua mihi præter spem attulit cupedias ad lecti mei voluptatem.* ” Wellauer has a way of his own, but his meaning is a mystery : “ *παροφάνημα εὐηῆς* est gaudium, quod ex ejus morte seu sepulchro (sic εὐηή Soph. El. 429) capitur, *παροφάνημα χλιδῆς* gaudium, quod ad priores delicias accedit.” Mr. Symmons is clearly wrong :

“ His love ! his beauty ! ‘Twas to me he brought
This piece of daintiness, to cheat my bed.”

Cassandra must surely, in any case, be the nominative to *ἐπῆγαν* as well as to *κεῖται*.

(2) “ *Hæc si satis salva sint habenda ad utramque Helenam et Clytemnestram traherem præsertim cùm διψεῖσι præcesserit.* Habent enim, ni fallor, comparationem malorum quæ Atreo et Thyestæ illata sunt, cum

body, like some hateful raven, she boasts that she will chaunt a discordant strain.

CLYTEM.—Now thou hast uttered a juster sentiment from thy lips, in arraigning the tremendous fiend of this race: for it is by him that the thirst for lapping gore has been made to rage in our bowels. Before the ancient wounds are staunched, fresh blood flows.

SEM.—You assent to its being the mighty fiend who visits this house with his heavy wrath—alas! alas! an evil assent to fatal and insatiable calamity. Alas! alas! it proceeds from Jove, the first and last cause of every event: for what among mortals comes to its completion without the will of Jove? What of these deeds hath not been ratified by Heaven?

CHORUS.—Alas! alas! my king, my king, how shall I lament thee? What wailings shall I pour forth, from the affection of my soul? Ah! here thou liest, in this woven work of Arachne, having breathed forth thy life by an impious murder.

SEM.—Ah me! Ah me! Lowly thou liest on no kingly couch, slain by an assassin's deed, with the double-edged axe wielded in the hand.

CLYTEM.—You assert justly that this was my deed; but do not add that I am the wife of Agamemnon. For it was the ancient furious fiend of Atreus, the ruthless banqueter, that having come in apparition like to the wife of this dead man, cut him off, sacrificing a full-grown victim in addition to the babes.

SEM.—Who will attest that thou art guiltless of this murder? How, how can it be? Perchance the avenging Spirit of his ancestry might assist in the deed. For Mars is urged on in these miseries by the streams of kindred

iis quæ per Helenam et Clytemnestram Menelao et Agamemnoni contigerunt. Id notat vox *ἰσόψυχος*, que h. l. nihil aliud quam simpl. *ἴσος*, par vel simile valet. Verterim igitur, *O Genie, quæ in hasce domos et geminos Tantalidas (Atreum et Thyestem) gravis incumbis, par robur jam per fæminas (Hel. scilicet et Clytemnestram) quo mihi cor angitur, exerves.*”—
BUTLER.

blood; and there is a point to which advancing he will even freeze with horror¹ him who fed on his children.

CHORUS.—Alas! alas! my king, my king, how shall I lament thee? What wailings shall I pour forth, from the affection of my soul? Ah! here thou liest, in this woven work of Arachne, having breathed forth thy life by an impious murder.

SEM.—Ah me! Ah me! Lowly thou liest on no kingly couch, slain by an assassin's deed, with the double-edged axe wielded in the hand.

CLYTEM.—I do not deem that his death was ignominious: for did not he cause a treacherous calamity to his house? But having done undeserved wrong to my offspring sprung from his embrace, the much-lamented Iphigenia, and having met with a deserved return, let him not proudly boast in Hades, since by the death of the murderous sword he hath atoned for the injuries which he inflicted.

SEM.—I am perplexed, through want of judgment, in what way I shall turn my anxious and subtle thought so as to bring relief amid the ruin of this house. I tremble to hear the splashing of the shower of blood that shakes these walls; for it falls no longer in drops. And Fate for another baneful deed is sharpening the edge of vengeance on a fresh whetstone.

CHORUS.—O earth! earth! would that thou hadst entombed me, before that I had seen him laid in the lowly bed of the silver-encircled bath! Who will bury him—who bewail him? Will you dare, after having slain your husband, to lament his death, and impiously bestow this thankless favour in atonement of your atrocious deeds?

SEM.—But who uttering with tears the funeral eulogy of this godlike hero will exert himself in the task with sincerity of feeling?

CLYTEM.—It pertains not to thee to speak of this office: by us he fell, he died—and we will bury him—not with

(1) We have no hesitation in adopting *πάχων* as the true reading, both because it is required by the sense of the passage, and has been sanctioned by the very best authorities.

lamentations issuing from these walls ; but Iphigenia, having come forth to meet her father, as she ought, beside the rapid flow of the streams of sorrow, and having thrown her arms affectionately around him, will greet him with a daughter's kiss.

SEM.—This reproach succeeds to reproach : but of these things it is difficult to judge what will be the issue. The spoiler is spoiled, the slayer is slain. And this law remains, while Jove remains, that sooner or later the guilty shall suffer in return. Who, then, shall banish from this house the imprecated succession of calamities authorised by Heaven ? Its race is fast bound in misery.

CHORUS.—O earth ! earth ! would that thou hadst entombed me, before that I had seen him laid in the lowly bed of the silver-encircled bath ! Who will bury him ? who bewail him ? Will you dare, after having slain your husband, to lament his death, and impiously bestow this thankless favour in atonement of your atrocious deeds ?

SEM.—But who uttering with tears the funeral eulogy of this godlike hero will exert himself in the task with sincerity of feeling ?

CLYTEM.—He met, as justice required, with this prophetic doom. But I now wish, having made a league with the fiend of the Pleisthenidæ, to resign myself to these present woes, though hard to be endured ; but that for the future, departing from this house, he wear out some other race by kindred murders. And it will quite suffice for me if I retain but a small portion of our wealth, and succeed in removing from these abodes the madness of mutual slaughters.

ÆGISTHUS.

O gladdening light of this avenging day ! Now would I say, that the Gods on high, exacting retribution from mortals, looked down on the pollutions of the earth ; since

(1) “Ægisthi personam, quamvis in ipso fine dramatis, miro cum artificio depinxit Æschylus, prosperis in rebus insolentem, sua ipsius scelera speciosa retributionis nomine obtegentem, quin et divinam quoque justitiam secum facere fingentem, et adversus imbellies senes, quod pravitatis et ignaviae certissimum indicium est, jactantiores.”—BUTLER.

I behold, to my joy, this man out-stretched in the enfolding tissue of the Furies, repaying by his death the treacherous deeds of his father's hands. For Atreus his father, the Ruler of this land, being at contention about the sovereignty with Thyestes my father—and, to explain it clearly, his own brother—expelled him from his country and his home. And the wretched Thyestes, returning again a suppliant at the altar, gained thereby a safe protection, so that he should not himself, dying, stain with his blood the pavement of his father's house. But Atreus, the impious father of this man, with seeming courtesy rather than friendship, appearing to celebrate joyfully a day of feasting in welcome of my father, gave him to feed on the flesh of his children. Sitting aloof in secret, he minced the extremities of the feet and the ends of the fingers; and Thyestes, straightway taking through ignorance the disguised fragments, ate a banquet that you see has proved the cause of unsparing ruin to his race. Afterwards, when he knew too late the unnatural deed, he shrieked, and falls backward, disgorging the bloody feast: and he imprecates an intolerable destiny on the Pelopidæ, justly consigning to curses the outrage of that banquet, that by a like fate might the whole race of Pleisthenes perish. In consequence, you behold this man laid low before you; and I with justice have devised his death. For he drove me out, along with my wretched father, being his thirteenth child, and yet a babe in swaddling-clothes: but Justice restored me, when reared to manhood. And though I was not present, yet I reached this man, having combined against him all the stratagems of hostile counsel. Thus even death would seem glorious to me, now that I have seen him subdued in the toils of Vengeance.

CHORUS.—Ægisthus, I do not approve of insolence in a coward: but do you avow that you wilfully slew this man, and alone plotted the death that was dealt on him? I say, that you may be assured your head shall not escape the execrations of the people, and the volleys of stones hurled against you in just punishment.

ÆGISTHUS.—Do you, who sit at the lowest oar, utter these

threats against your masters in the higher station of the vessel? You shall learn, being an old man, how grievous it is for one of your years to be taught that you are deficient in wisdom: for chains, and the pangs of famine, are physicians of the mind, the most skilful in divining a remedy to instruct even old age. Looking at this example, do you not perceive my meaning? Do not kick against the pricks, lest striking them you suffer injury.

CHORUS.—O woman! didst thou, the guardian of the house of this man who but lately returned from the war, after dishonouring his bed, also devise this death against a hero the leader of armies?

ÆGISTHUS.—These words, too, will be the cause to you of sorrow. But you have a tongue unlike that of Orpheus: for he, indeed, drew every thing after him by the rapture inspired by his voice; whilst you, having provoked even the mild by your barkings, will hurry them away. But being overcome, we shall see you more peaceable.

CHORUS.—Shalt thou, forsooth, be king of the Argives, who after having plotted the death of this man, hadst not courage to do the deed with thy own hand?

ÆGISTHUS.—Because guile was obviously the province of a woman, and I was, of old, a suspected enemy. But, by means of his wealth, I will endeavour to rule the citizens; and I will bind to a heavy yoke the unruly and pampered colt that refuses to run in my harness; and hateful hunger, dwelling with him in darkness, shall soon see him tamed.

CHORUS.—Why didst thou not dare, in thy coward soul, to slay this man with thy own hand? but a woman, the pollution of her country and her country's Gods, deprived him of life. Does Orestes then somewhere behold the light, that, returning hither with favouring fortune, he may prove the all-conquering slayer of this guilty pair?

ÆGISTHUS.—But if ye are determined to act and speak in this manner, ye shall quickly feel——

CHORUS.—What ho! my dear comrades, the struggle is at hand!

ÆGISTHUS.—* * * * *

CHORUS.—What ho! let every one lightly wield his unsheathed sword.

ÆGISTHUS.—I too, with sword in hand, will not refuse to die.

CHORUS.—You have said you will die to us who accept the omen: but let us put our fortunes to the question.

CLYTEM.—By no means, O dearest of men! let us do further harm; for even to have reaped thus much is a harvest of bitter misery. There is already enough of woe: let us shed no more blood. But go now, old men, to your several homes, before ye suffer from your attempts. It was fated that we should undertake what we have done: and if there be sorrow to any one in consequence, we too have enough of this, being struck calamitously by the heavy wrath of the deity. Such is the advice of a woman, if any one deign to listen to it.

ÆGISTHUS.—But that they should thus scatter against me the flowers of their empty speech, and vent such words, tempting their fate, and should err from temperate discretion against me their master——

CHORUS.—It never can be in the nature of an Argive to fawn on a base man.

ÆGISTHUS.—But I shall yet get at you, some future day.

CHORUS.—Not if the God shall direct the steps of Orestes hither.

ÆGISTHUS.—I know that exiles feed on hope.

CHORUS.—Go on; batten on your guilt; and pollute justice; since now the power is granted to you.

ÆGISTHUS.—Know, that you shall yet pay me the penalty of this folly.

CHORUS.—Boast without fear, like the cock beside his dame.

CLYTEM.—Do not regard these vain barkings: you and I, bearing the sway in this house, will order all its affairs aright.

THE CHOËPHORÆ.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

ORESTES.

ELECTRA.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

ÆGISTHUS.

PYLADES.

NURSE.

SERVANT.

CHORUS.

THE CHOËPHORÆ.

ORESTES.

' O MERCURY, God of the shades and guardian of thy Father's realms¹, do thou prove a preserver and an ally to me thy suppliant! for I come and return from exile to this land; and on this mound of his sepulchre I invoke my father to listen, to hear * * * * * On his tomb I offer this ringlet, which I cherished for Inachus; and this a second gift, in token of my sorrow * * * * * But what do I behold? What is this band of women that approaches, arrayed in sable garments? to what event shall I ascribe their appearance? Whether has some new death occurred in this house? or am I right in conjecturing that they are bearing libations to my father, the offerings that soothe the dead? It can be nothing else; for I think that I see my sister Electra advancing, conspicuous by the excess of her sorrow. O Jove, give me to revenge the death of a father, and do thou willingly vouchsafe thy aid to my cause! Pylades, let us stand aside, that I may

(1) Aristophanes has censured the ambiguities and tautologies of this prologue, in an amusing dialogue in the Frogs, v. 1150. The speakers are Euripides and Æschylus; and it is of course the part of the latter to defend himself against the criticisms of his rival.

(2) "In verbis πατρῷ ἐκοπτέων κράτη ambiguitatem quæsivit apud Aristophanem Euripides, que neque editores non fecerunt, possunt enim illa significare aut: *qui patris mei imperium respicis*, aut *qui officia à patre tuo tibi tradita exsequeris*. Priorem explicationem admodum ineptam, quam joci causâ Euripi tribuit Aristophanes, veram putant Schütz et Butler., altera verò quam apud Aristophanem Æschylus ipse profert, unicè vera et sensui accommodata est." WELLAUER. We agree with this editor in condemning his brethren; but his own interpretation is still a little too lax.

clearly learn what is the object of this suppliant band of women.

CHORUS.

I have been sent from the palace to conduct the libation to the tomb with the impetuous beating of the hand. My cheek is marked with the blood-streaming wound, the fresh-ploughed furrow of the nail¹: my heart for ever lives but on the food of sorrow; and the rent that destroys the tissue of the robe hath been severed in my grief, the folds that deck my bosom disparting through these gloomy calamities. For terror thrilling through the stiffened hair, presaging by dreams in the palace, and breathing his dread influence on sleep, fearfully awoke in the centre of our dwelling a midnight cry as he descended with all his horrors on the chambers of the women: and the interpreters of these dreams have, under solemn oath, announced from Heaven, that those beneath the earth are strongly moved with indignation and wrath against their murderers. The impious woman (O mother Earth!) sends me on this mission, seeking by such a thankless offering to avert her ills. But I fear to utter the words that she bade; for what can cleanse the stain of blood that hath been shed on the ground? Alas for this hearth, devoted to sorrow! alas for this house, that must sink in ruin! A sunless and abhorred gloom hath involved its walls since the day that its master died. And the majesty invincible, unconquered and irresistible of old, that was renowned in the discourse and in the recollections of his people, hath now departed; and every one is afraid. But good fortune is both a God among mortals; and more than a God: for the sudden vengeance of justice visits some indeed in the day; while on others, gathering force by the delay, it bursts

(1) " Sic Ceres apud Claudian. de raptu Proserp. v. 425 :

Accipe, quas merui pœnas; en ora fatiscunt
Vulneribus, grandesque rubent in pectore sulci.
Immemor en uterus crebrò contunditur ictu.

Simplicius extulit Euripide, Electr. 147. κατὰ φίλαν δυνχι τεμνομένα δέραν."

—SCHÜTZ.

forth at the twilight; and others it makes it prey amid the deepest shades of night. On account of the blood absorbed by the bounteous earth, there has been decreed an avenging slaughter, which will not pass away. The direst of visitations shall destroy the guilty cause of the disease by which we are pervaded. For to him that violates the nuptial chamber there is no salvation; and all the rivers, flowing in one channel, would flow in vain to wash the stain of murder from the polluted hand¹. But to me (for the Gods have reduced me to the fate of captivity, and far from the home of my fathers have forced me into a servile state) it is bitter to praise the deeds, right or wrong, of those who rule with violence, submitting in a manner unworthy of my earlier life, and suppressing by force the strong abhorrence of my soul. But I weep beneath my garments for the unavenged calamities of my masters, and my soul is congealed by its secret sorrows.

ELECTRA.

Ye captive maids, whose task it is to deck the chambers, since ye are here with me as conductors of these offerings, assist me with your advice in what I am about to inquire of you. As I pour forth on the tomb the libations of his kindred, how shall I say what is grateful to the dead? how shall I invoke the shade of my father? Shall I say that I bear these offerings to a beloved husband, from a loving wife—from my mother? I have not the heart to utter it; nor do I know what I can say, as I pour this thick libation on the tomb of my father. Or shall I speak these words as is the custom of mortals², that he recompense those who send these garlands with a gift befitting their evil deeds? Or silently and ignominiously, as my father perished, having

(1) " Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous sea incarnadine,
Making the green one red."— *Macbeth*, Act II. 1.

(2) " Pertinet ad *jus talionis* inter homines receptum; non ut Stanl. putabat ad *morem* inter effundendam libationem manes defuncti allo-
quendi."—SCHÜTZ.

poured forth the libation on the thirsty earth, shall I return, like one having emptied filth, casting away the vessel with averted eyes? Assist me, O friends, in this counsel; for we entertain a common hatred in the house. Conceal not your sentiments within your hearts, through fear of any one: for the decree of fate awaits alike the free, and the slave who is subject to another's hand. Speak, if you know any better counsels than these.

CHORUS.—Reverencing as an altar the tomb of your father, I will speak, since you desire it, the sentiments of my mind.

ELECTRA.—Speak then, as you reverence the tomb of my father.

CHORUS.—Pray, as you pour forth the libation, for blessings to those who favour his cause.

ELECTRA.—But who are those that I should name as his friends?

CHORUS.—First, indeed, yourself, and whoever hates Ægisthus.

ELECTRA.—Shall I make this prayer, then, both for myself and you?

CHORUS.—Do you consider yourself as already acquainted with this.

ELECTRA.—Whom besides, then, shall I add to this band?

CHORUS.—Forget not Orestes, even though he be far away.

ELECTRA.—You suggest this well, and have wisely instructed me.

CHORUS.—Next for the guilty, mindful of the murder.

ELECTRA.—What shall I pray? teach, and inform my ignorance.

CHORUS.—That there should come to them some deity, or some mortal—

ELECTRA.—Whether do you mean as a judge or as an avenger?

CHORUS.—Say simply, one who shall slay in return.

ELECTRA.—Is it consistent with religion for me to ask such things from the Gods?

CHORUS.—How not? to repay an enemy with evils¹.

ELECTRA.—O Mercury, God of the shades, come and proclaim to me that the Powers beneath the earth, the guardians of my father's house, hear my prayers; and Earth herself, who gives birth to all things, and having nourished them again receives their increase! And I, as I pour forth these lustral waters for mortals, pray, invoking my father, that he will pity me and the dear Orestes, so that we may again reign in his palace. For now we wander, being sold, as it were, by our mother; and she has taken in exchange, as a husband, Ægisthus, who shared with her in your murder. I indeed am in the place of a slave; while Orestes is an exile from his wealth: and they, in their pride, triumph greatly in your downfal. But I pray, O father, and do you hear me! that Orestes may come hither with prosperous fortune; and grant to me, that I may be chaster than my mother, and more pious in my deeds! For ourselves we offer these prayers; but for our enemies I implore, O father, that an avenger of thy death may appear, and may requite thy murderers with the death which they deserve! I insert these words in the midst of my prayer for good, uttering against them this evil imprecation. But do thou send to us from below the blessings we desire, along with the Gods, and Earth, and victorious Justice! After such prayers, I pour forth these libations.—But it is fitting for you to burst forth into lamentations, giving loud voice to the pæan of the dead.

CHORUS.—Pour forth, amid groans, the mournful tear for our murdered lord, that we may thus confirm what is good, and avert the accursed abomination of evil by the libation of the sacred stream. Hear me, O august master! hear me, as I pray from my darkened spirit! O woe! alas! alas! When shall the deliverer of the house arise, the Scy-

(1) Before the introduction of Christianity, revenge was generally considered as a virtue; and we find even Aristotle talking, without any condemnation, of its pleasures. The new Religion, which denounced it as an unholy and baneful passion, did more for the civilization and tranquillity of the world, by the propagation of this single doctrine, than all the boasted wisdom of heathen philosophy.

thian warrior of the stubborn spear; and Mars, amid the combat shaking in his hand the curved dart, and brandishing by the hilt the weapons of the close encounter?

ELECTRA.—My father, indeed, hath already received the libations through the pores of the earth; (O mightiest Herald of the Powers above and below!) but do you listen to the new tidings which I bring.

CHORUS.—Relate them, if you please; but my heart beats violently through fear.

ELECTRA.—I behold these shorn ringlets on the tomb.

CHORUS.—To what man, or deep-bosomed maid, may they belong?

ELECTRA.—This offers an easy conjecture to the opinion of every one.

CHORUS.—How then am I, aged, to be instructed by you younger?

ELECTRA.—There could be no one who would cut them off, except me.

CHORUS.—For they are enemies, whose duty it were to offer the mourner's tribute of hair.

ELECTRA.—And, in truth, this is of a very similar hue in appearance.

CHORUS.—To what hair? for this I wish to know.

ELECTRA.—It is very like in appearance to my own.

CHORUS.—Can it be that this is the secret gift of Orestes?

ELECTRA.—It most resembles his locks.

CHORUS.—But how could he have dared to come hither?

ELECTRA.—He has sent this shorn ringlet as a grateful offering to his father.

CHORUS.—You utter words which do not the less excite my sorrow, if he is never to touch this land with his foot.

ELECTRA.—On my heart, too, hath gushed the wave of bitter grief; and I have been struck as by a piercing dart. But from my eyes, long dry, there fall the unexpected

(1) Hermann and Wellauer condemn this line, which appears to have crept in here, out of its proper place at v. 118.

drops of a tempestuous shower, as I gaze upon this lock : for how can I suppose that its tresses belonged to any other of the citizens ? And surely neither could the murderer have shorn it, surely not my mother, she who feels sentiments of hatred towards the children by no means accordant with the maternal name. But I know not how I can directly assent to the opinion that this ornament came from Orestes, the most dear to me of mortals : but I am soothed by the hope. Alas ! would that it had a welcome voice, like a messenger, so that I might no longer be agitated between contending thoughts ; but that I might either reject the detected tress, if at least it had been cut from the head of an enemy, or that if it were from kindred it might be able to bear token of sorrow along with me, an ornament of this tomb, and an honour of my father¹ ! But we invoke the Gods, who know indeed in what storms, like mariners, we are tossed ; but if we are fated to obtain safety, a mighty stem may arise from a small seed. And, besides, here is a second sign², the prints of feet, that resemble and correspond with mine ; for these are the marks of two foot-steps, both of himself and of some companion of his journey. The heels and the marks of the tendons, being measured, coincide exactly with the impress of mine³. But anguish and confusion of the senses oppress me.

ORESTES.

Pray that what remains may fall out well, uttering to the Gods such prayers as require completion.

ELECTRA.—For what have I now obtained, by the blessing of the Gods?

ORESTES.—You have come to the sight of those whom you lately prayed to see.

(1) The accusatives in the text are governed by *els* understood.

(2) Is this to be considered as a *τεκμήριον*, according to Aristotle's definition ? Pauw, who had a quick eye for an absurdity, has attacked it with the ferocity for which he was also distinguished : " *Hoc δειτερον τεκμήριον* planè ridiculum est ; et mirum, quod eruditissimus Comicus id non perfuderit aceto suo ; sentiunt omnes qui aliquid sentiunt."

(3) This is a *τεκμήριον*, and a good one, that the symmetry of Electra's person was not the most faultless.

ELECTRA.—And whom of mortals do you know me to have called on?

ORESTES.—I know that you were earnestly longing for Orestes.

ELECTRA.—And in what, then, do I obtain my prayers?

ORESTES.—I am he: seek not one more dear than me.

ELECTRA.—But are you not, O stranger, involving me in some deceit?

ORESTES.—In that case I should be inventing stratagems against myself.

ELECTRA.—But do you not wish to mock my misfortunes?

ORESTES.—No; for in mocking yours I should also mock my own.

ELECTRA.—Do I then address you with these words as being really Orestes?

ORESTES.—When you see me in my own person, then you refuse to recognise me; but yet when you looked on this shorn tress of votive hair corresponding with the head of your brother, and examined the traces of my footsteps, you were quickly fluttered, and thought that you saw me. Mark now this ringlet of hair, applying it to the place from which it was shorn; and behold this woven garment, the work of your hand, and the strokes of the shuttle and the figures of wild animals inwrought! Compose yourself; and do not let your senses forsake you through joy: for I know that those who ought to be dearest to us are our bitter enemies.

ELECTRA.—O dearest care of your father's house, long-lamented hope of salvation to your race! confiding in your valour you shall regain the palace of your father. O beloved being, who combine in yourself four ties to my regard¹! for it needs must be that I address you as father; and my natural affection for my mother inclines to you, for she is most justly hated; and for my sister, who was

(1) “Affectionem ait suam naturalem in quatuor partes divisam; nempè, erga patrem, matrem, sororem Iphigeniam, et fratrem Orestem, in unum jam collatam fuisse Orestem; quippè cum pater et soror mortui essent, mater exosa.”—STANLEY.

cruelly sacrificed; and you are my faithful brother, bringing glory to me, if only Strength and Justice, with a third, Jove the mightiest of all, be present to my aid.

ORESTES.—Jove, O Jove! do thou regard our state, and behold the orphan young of the eagle sire who died in the folds and wreaths of a deadly serpent! But the pangs of hunger afflict his orphaned race; for they are not able to bear the prey, like their father¹, to the nest. Thus you may behold both me and her (I mean Electra) a fatherless offspring, both subject to the same exile from their home. And having destroyed these young of a father who sacrificed at thy shrines and greatly honoured thee, whence shalt thou obtain from a like hand the honours of the solemn feast? Neither, if thou permittest the offspring of the eagle to perish, shalt thou again have it in thy power to send credible signs of thy will to mortals; nor shall the stem of this royal race, if utterly blasted, again avail thy altars on the days of sacrifice. Bestow on us thy care; and raise from its ruins a mighty house, which now appears to have fallen for ever!

CHORUS.—O children, O preservers of your father's house, be silent! lest some one should hear, O children, and, indulging his tongue, should relate all to those in power, whom may I one day behold lifeless amid the pitchy smoke of the flaming pyre!

ORESTES.—The mighty Oracle of Loxias will not prove false; which bade me encounter this danger, and loudly excited me to the task; and denounced the fiercest storms of anguish in my fevered breast, if I should not pursue with vengeance the guilty murderers of my father, whom he commanded me to requite in the same manner with slaughter, being driven to fury by the loss of my possessions; and he announced, that if I failed I should make atonement to my

(1) Blomfield very correctly renders *θήραν πατρόφαν, prædam qualēm pater capere solebat.* Schütz has it: “*non enim valent* (matris et Ægisthi vi prohibiti) *prædam paternam nidis inferre*, h. e. bonorum pater-norum hæreditatis jure ad se pertinentium usufructu prohibentur.” Nothing can be conceived more vilely repugnant to all taste and sense.

father's shade by being subjected to many bitter ills. For he declared, as he spoke, such punishment from the sterile soil to our citizens as would make their enemies rejoice; but to us, diseases—leprosies, that with cruel fangs should fasten on the flesh, corroding and destroying its former nature, and white hairs which should spring up after this disease. And he announced, that I should see clearly, even when I directed my gaze in darkness, other attacks of the Furies, that would result from my father's unavenged blood. For the dark shaft sent from the shades by the kindred dead who call for vengeance, and madness, and vain fears by night, harrow and disturb their victim¹; and his body, lacerated by their brazen scourge, is driven from the city. And for such it is the lot, neither to have a share in the festal goblet nor the libation of sacrifice; and that the unseen wrath of a father should exclude him from the altar; that no one should receive him or aid him in his expiation; and that, unhonoured and forsaken of all, he should at length die, miserably consumed by an unsparing destruction. In these oracles, therefore, it is my duty to confide; and even though I disbelieved them, still the deed must be done. For many desires conspire to this end—both the commands of the Gods, and the deep sorrow for my father, and the want of possessions which oppresses me in addition—that the inhabitants of this land, the most glorious of mortals, who with gallant souls overthrew Troy, should no longer be subject to two women. For the mind of Ægisthus is that of a woman: and if not, he shall soon give proof of it.

CHORUS.—But, O ye mighty Fates, grant, with the sanction of Jove, that this may be consummated in the way in which justice should proceed! In return for hostile words let hostile words be repaid—thus Justice, as she exacts

(1) “ Nolite enim putare, quemadmodum in fabulis sæpenumerò videtis, eos qui aliquid impiè sceleratèque commiserint, agitari et perterreri furiarum tædis ardentibus. Sua quemque fraus et suus terror maximè vexat, suum quemque scelus agitat, amentiâque afficit, suæ malæ cogitationes conscientiæque animi terrent.”—*Cic. Orat. pro Rose. c. 24.*

her debt, loudly exclaims—and for the bloody wound let the guilty suffer the bloody wound in return. The worker of wrong must feel its retribution, and very ancient is the saying that proclaims this truth.

ORESTES.—O father, unhappy father, by saying or doing what shall I succeed in wafting by prosperous gales from afar, where the chambers of thy repose contain thee, a light that may compensate for our former gloom? For then should the strains of joy be celebrated, and his dirge reflect glory on the son of Atreus, the ancient lord of this house.

CHORUS.—My child, the devouring jaw of the flame quells not the spirit of the dead, but from the tomb he manifests his wrath. The slain is lamented, and the murderer is brought to light; and the righteous grief for fathers and the authors of existence makes search into all the guilty deed, agitated by strong emotion to its quest of vengeance.

ELECTRA.—Hear now, O father, in turn, my mournful woes! The sepulchral lamentation of your two children bewails your fate; and your tomb has received us at once as suppliants and exiles. Which of these is well? and which without evils? Is not ours an overpowering calamity?

CHORUS.—But yet from these sorrowings the God, if he wills it, may cause more joyful sounds to arise; and, in place of sepulchral lamentations, the hymn of triumph in the royal abodes may hail the new return of the object of our love.

ORESTES.—Would, O father, that beneath the walls of Troy thou hadst perished by the wound of some Lycian spear! Bequeathing thy renown to thy house, and establishing an envied course of life for thy children to pursue¹, thou wouldest have occupied a tomb of lofty structure in

(1) “*Liberorumque vita ac rebus felicem astatem condens: κελεύθοις elegans ita, et notum; ἐπιστρέψοντος quæ mentes et oculos in se convertat.*” PAUW. “*Verte, vitam in quâ liberi sine impedimento versari possint.*”

BLOMFIELD. We have given the preference to the former interpretation of the word, both because we consider it more elegant and less forced.

a foreign land—a fate that would have caused lighter sorrow to thy race¹.

CHORUS.—Beloved by thy friends who there gloriously died, thou wouldest have been even beneath the earth a king distinguished by sacred honour, and a minister of the mighty Powers that rule the shades; for thou wert, while in life, a king among those who fill their appointed station with the hand of power and the awe-commanding sceptre.

ELECTRA.—Nor slain beneath the walls of Troy hast thou been buried, O father, along with the other victims of the spear beside the streams of Scamander. Oh! would that thy murderers had thus first been subdued, so that thou, when afar, hadst heard of their deadly fate, thyself exempted from these sufferings!

CHORUS.—The wishes that you express, my child, are better than gold, and greater than high and Hyperborean fortune²; but they are the cause of pain. For the sound of this double scourge approaches: the allies of these two³ are already beneath the earth; and the hands of the hateful pair in power are stained with guilt: but on the children that scourge hath more heavily descended.

ELECTRA.—These words have pierced right through my ear, like a sharp weapon. Jove, O Jove, if thou sendest up from below the visitation of a late vengeance on the daring and guilty hand of mortals, even on a parent must the punishment be alike inflicted!

(1) “Ædibus tolerabilem, scil. tuis liberoramque tuorum propriis.” PAUW. “Ædificiis amplum ab εὐφορτίῳ abundo!” HEATH. The latter of these commentators wrote professedly against the former, and kept no terms in the abuse with which he loaded him. The reader may judge from this sample which was the more likely to catch the spirit of the author.

(2) “De felicitate Hyperboreorum res nota. Pomponius Mela III. 5. *Diutius quam ulli mortalium et beatius vivunt.* Cf. Gesneri de navigationibus extra columnas Herculis Praelect. II. in ejusdem *Orphicis*, p. 467. Hæc igitur Chorus significat: Quanquam per se triste est liberis patrem decidere, tamen, quod optästi, ut pater tuus potius ante Trojam occidisset, pro doloris magnitudine quo nunc opprimeris nimis magnæ felicitatis esset.”—SCHÜTZ.

(3) Orestes and Electra.

CHORUS.—May it be mine to welcome with songs the bitter shriek of the man as he sinks beneath his wound, and of the woman as she expires ! For why should I conceal how there ever hovers before my mind, and before my face, the fierce gust of passion, the fury of heart, and the anger of hate ?

ORESTES.—And some day may Jupiter, doubly armed to destroy, stretch forth his hand, alas ! alas ! and smite their heads ! May security return to this land ! I demand justice to be exacted from the unjust : and O ye Powers that are honoured among the shades, listen to my prayer !

CHORUS.—But it is a law, indeed, that the blood of slaughter, when shed on the earth, calls for other blood : for murder makes its appeal to an avenging Power, that awakes from those who perished before a second calamity to succeed the first.

ELECTRA.—Where, where now are the Powers that rule the dead ? Behold, ye potent curses of the murdered ! behold all that remain of the race of Atreus, bereft of resource, and ignominiously driven from their house ! Where, O Jove, can any one look for succour ?

CHORUS.—My heart again throbs with agitation, as I hear these wailings ; and at one time, indeed, I yield to despondency, and my thoughts become dark within me as I listen to your words. But when again you are confident through hope of aid, my sorrow departs, so that all seems well.

ORESTES.—What shall we say without erring ? Assuredly it is right to extenuate the wrongs which we suffer at the hands of parents. But wrongs such as ours admit of no alleviation : for, like some ferocious wolf, our mother from her birth had a mind unmoved by pity.

ELECTRA.—She struck a martial stroke ; and then, after the custom of the female warrior of Cissia, you might have seen the eager blows of her hand descending from on high and afar with increasing force, with varied aim and with oft-repeated wounds ; while my head, beaten with the violence of despair, gives back the sound of the blows. Oh ! oh ! fierce and daring mother, with an hostile funeral you had

the heart to bury the monarch without his subjects, and the unpitied husband without the obsequies of woe'!

ORESTES.—Alas! all your tale is of dishonour; but, through the blessing of the Gods, and by means of my hands, she shall yet in truth atone for the base wrongs she did my father; and then may I perish, after having deprived her of life!

ELECTRA.—But more—that you may know this insult—his limbs were mangled'; and as she slew him, so she buries him, seeking to attach an intolerable fate to your life. You hear the ignominious sufferings of your father.

ORESTES.—You speak of my father's fate.

ELECTRA.—But I was kept aloof, dishonoured and despised; and excluded from the inner chambers' like a mischievous dog, I gave birth to tears more readily than smiles, glad if I could conceal from observation my weeping griefs. Hearing these statements, inscribe them on your thoughts, and transmit my words through your ears, to settle undisturbed within your mind. For these things indeed are so, and do you seek yourself to learn what remains. But it is necessary to descend to the contest with inflexible resolution.

(1) "Haud omnino absimilis Shakspearii locus in nobili Tragœdiâ cui titulus, *Hamlet*, IV. 3.:

— 'his obscure funeral—

No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,
No noble rite, nor formal ostentation.' " BUTLER.

(2) "To mangle a dead body was more horrid than the act of murder itself; as it made the manes of the deceased a dishonourable spectacle among the shades below, where they were thought to retain these disfiguring mutilations, and were of course disabled from any acts of vengeance. Plato built a fanciful philosophy on this opinion; of which Virgil knew how to make the true poetic use, when he describes Eriphyle pointing to the wound of her son :

— ' Moestamque Eriphylen

Crudelis nati monstrantem vulnera cernit.'

The figure of Deiphobus is represented under the same idea, *AEn.* VI. 494." — POTTER.

(3) " Virgines erant in interiori domo; et ibi degebant à vulgi oculis remotæ; quid igitur factum Electræ? Virginum conclavi exclusa ut canis noxia in ipsa aulâ, et atrio oberrabat neglecta." — PAUW.

ORESTES.—I call upon you, O father, to aid those who are dear to you !

ELECTRA.—And I, drenched in tears, add my voice to the request.

CHORUS.—And this band of common friends echoes the prayer. Hear, coming to the light, and lend thy aid against enemies !

ORESTES.—May Mars engage with Mars, and vengeance with vengeance !

ELECTRA.—O Gods, consummate according to justice—

CHORUS.—Trembling steals over me, as I hear these prayers. Fate remains fixed of old, and, to those who pray for it, may come. Alas for the calamities of this race, and the unnatural and bloody wound of destruction ! Alas for these grievous and intolerable woes ! Alas for the irremediable anguish that ever festers in this house ! It is the subject of exulting hymns to the bloody Goddesses beneath the earth, that neither from afar, nor by strangers, but by kindred hands, they shall sacrifice life. But hearing, O blessed Powers beneath the earth, this prayer—willingly send assistance to lead the children to victory !

ORESTES.—O father, whose death was not such as became a king, grant to my request that I obtain the power in thy palace.

ELECTRA.—And I, father, proffer to thee a similar prayer, that I may escape, after inflicting a dire fate on *Ægisthus* !

ORESTES.—For thus should ritual feasts be instituted by men to thy honour ; but if not, thou shalt be forgotten at the splendid banquet¹, and amid the fires of sacrifice that arise with fragrance from earth.

ELECTRA.—And I shall bring to thee from the paternal abode the nuptial offerings of my unwasted inheritance² ; for beyond all others I shall reverence this tomb.

(1) “ Agamemnonem mortuum nec inferiis nec silicernio honestatum plus semel conqueritur Electra, tum apud nostrum, tum apud Sophoclem et Euripidem : credebat quippe veteres defunctorum animas ab inferis excitatas iis vesci et delectari.”—STANLEY.

(2) Affection to her father peculiarly marks the character of Electra, of

ORESTES.—O Earth, restore to me my father, to behold the strife !

ELECTRA.—O Proserpine, do thou grant us victory in its fairest shape !

ORESTES.—Remember, O father, the baths in which thou wert deprived of life !

ELECTRA.—And remember the invention of the net, which they practised against thee !

ORESTES.—Thou wert bound, O father, in fetters, but not of brass.

ELECTRA.—Basely entangled in the folds of the insidious garment.

ORESTES.—Is thy spirit not roused, O father ! by these insults ?

ELECTRA.—Dost thou not raise aloft thy dearest head ?

ORESTES.—Send either justice to assist your friends, or grant that your enemies be recompensed with equal sufferings, if at least, after having been conquered, you wish to prevail in your turn !

ELECTRA.—And hear, O father, this my last appeal ! Beholding these young ones sitting by thy tomb, pity both the female and the male offspring ; and do not extinguish the blood of this race of Pelops ! For thus, even in the tomb, thou art not yet dead ; since children are to the departed hero the preservers of his fame, and, as corks, support the net, preserving the entwisted line from sinking in the deep. Hear ! It is for thy sake that such lamentations are poured ; and do thou remember and regard these words !

CHORUS.—And, in truth, ye have both uttered blameless speeches, in honour of his tomb, and of his fate which has been yet unpitied. But as to what remains, since you are animated in thought to the deed, you may now fulfil its work, and make trial of your fortune.

ORESTES.—It shall be done : but it is not out of the way

of which she could not give a stronger instance than this. Deprived, as she now was, of all her share of her father's riches, she had it not in her power to offer any presents at his tomb ; but should *Ægisthus* be slain, she devotes even her nuptial dowry to that purpose.”—POTTER.

to inquire, why she hath sent the libations? from what reason she pays this late honour to a calamity that cannot be assuaged? The wretched offering was sent to the dead, and not to the living who could regard it. I cannot conjecture the object of these gifts; but they are insufficient to expiate her crime: for though you should pour forth endless libations in atonement for one murder, the labour were in vain: such is the common saying. But tell to me, if you know it, what I wish to hear.

CHORUS.—I know it, O my child, for I was present: the impious woman having been agitated by dreams and terrors that disturb her repose, hath sent these libations.

ORESTES.—Have you also learned the dream, so as to relate it correctly?

CHORUS.—She thought, as she herself says, that she had given birth to a serpent.

ORESTES.—How does this tale end? and what is its issue?

CHORUS.—She fancied that the new-born monster lay, like a child, in swaddling-clothes, desiring some food; and in the dream she gave it her own breast.

ORESTES.—And how was it that the nipple was unwounded by her horrid suckling?

CHORUS.—It was wounded, so that with the milk it drew the clotted blood.

ORESTES.—The dreams of mortals come with no vain warning.

CHORUS.—But she, startled from her sleep, shrieked in terror; and many lamps which had been extinguished in darkness again blazed up in the palace, at the call of my mistress. And afterwards she sends these funeral libations, expecting them to prove an effectual remedy of her ills.

ORESTES.—But I pray to this earth, and to the tomb of my father, that this dream may be accomplished as I desire! and, in truth, I judge of it that it seems all consistent. For if the serpent, leaving the same birth-place with me, was dressed in my swaddling-clothes, and applied its mouth to the same breath that gave me nourishment, and mingled a mother's milk with the clotted blood, while she shrieked

through anguish and dread—it is fated, that, as she nursed this horrid monster, she should die a violent death; and that I, assuming the serpent's nature, should slay her, as this dream foretells. But concerning these portents I choose you as my interpreter.

CHORUS.—May it be as you have spoken! But explain to your friends what remains to be executed, telling these what they are to do, and those from what they are to refrain.

ORESTES.—My commands are simple: I advise Electra to go within, and to conceal the designs which we have mutually formed; so that they who slew by guile a hero in his glory may be also the victim of guile, dying in the same toils, even as has been predicted by the God of Oracles, king Apollo, the Prophet that never yet hath erred. For in the character of a stranger, and completely equipped as such, I will approach with Pylades to the gates of the court, pretending to be a guest and foreign friend of the house. But we will both speak the Parnassian language, imitating the sounds of the Phocian tongue. And if it happen that no one of the keepers of the gates receive us with glad inclination, since the house is distracted by its misfortunes, we will remain as we are, so that some one passing by the palace may conjecture our wishes and speak these words: “Why with the closed gate do ye exclude the suppliant, if Ægisthus being present at home knows it?”—If then I shall pass the threshold of the gates of the court, and shall find him on the throne of my father, or even if coming before me he shall address me and cast his eyes upon me, be assured, that before he has said “Of what country is the stranger?” I will lay him dead, having swiftly transfixed him with my sword; and the Fury, who hath not been stinted of slaughter, shall drink a third draught of undiluted blood. Do you¹, therefore, now watch well the proceedings in the house, that all may happen agreeably to our designs: and to you² I recommend to keep

(1) Electra.

(2) The Chorus.

strict guard on your tongues, and to be silent where it is proper, and to speak only what is required by the season. As for what remains, I commit it to the vigilance of the friend who assists my success in this contest of the sword.

CHORUS.—The earth indeed breeds many and dreadful objects of fear and horror ; and the arms of the sea teem with creatures hostile to mortals ; and meteors on high flash through the regions of middle air ; and one might tell of monsters that creep and monsters that fly, and of the stormy fury of the whirlwinds. But who can tell the extreme audacity of the thoughts of man ; and of women daring in mind ; and the lawless impetuosity of loves that mingle with the calamities of mortals ? The force of forbidden passion, prevailing in the female breast, violates the harmonies of social union both among men and the inferior animals. Let him who is not heedless of reflection acknowledge this truth, when he hears of the device of the consuming fire which the wretched daughter of Thestius¹ contrived for the destruction of her son, committing to the flames the fatal brand, whose existence was destined to be the same with that of her son from the time that he uttered his first cries on coming from the womb, and to correspond with it in measure through his life to the day appointed by fate for its termination. There is another, too, celebrated in story, whom we ought to hate—the bloody Scylla, who, at the instigation of enemies, destroyed a father whom she should have loved, being persuaded by the gifts of Minos, the Cretan necklaces of gold, and having with shameless purpose despoiled Nisus of his immortal ringlet as he lay

(1) “ When Althæa, the daughter of Thestius, was delivered of Meleager, the Destinies attended at her labour ; and upon the birth of the child, throwing a log on the fire as they spun his thread of life, pronounced this charm : ‘ O new-born child, we assign the same period of existence to this log and to thee ! ’ then vanished. Althæa snatched the log from the flames, and preserved it with great care ; till Meleager having slain her two brothers, for rudely taking the head of the Calydonian boar from Atalanta, to whom he had presented it, this unnatural mother threw the fatal brand into the fire, and the charm of the Destinies was fulfilled.”

—POTTER.

breathing in unsuspecting sleep¹: but Hermes overtook her with retribution. But since I have made mention of ruthless cruelties, I will include, though their place should have been the first, the hateful marriage detested by this house, and the plots devised in the mind of a woman. Honour is to be paid to the warrior arrayed in armour and raging in battle against his enemies; but at home I approve of a hearth undisturbed by violence, and in women of a disposition that is not prone to daring. Of former ills the Lemnian² is the most celebrated in story; and it has been deplored in succeeding times with execration; for men are wont to compare any horrible deed to the Lemnian atrocities. But through pollutions abhorred of Heaven the race of mortals perishes unhonoured; for no one holds in reverence that which is displeasing to the Gods. Which of these combined instances have I not quoted with justice? But the bitter point of the sword of vengeance will soon inflict a mortal wound through the lungs; for the guilt of those who lawlessly transgress the awful decrees of Jove shall not be trampled under foot and forgotten. The foundations of the altar of Justice are firmly fixed; and Fate, forging the sword, prepares it for the deed; while the triumphant Fury, bringing her mysterious purposes to light, introduces fresh slaughter into the house, and at length avenges the pollution of the blood that was shed of old.

ORESTES.—O boy, boy, be not deaf to the knocking at the gate of the court! O boy, boy, I again repeat, who is

(1) Nisus, the king of Alcathoë, had a lock of purple hair, on the preservation of which his safety depended. His daughter Scylla was persuaded by the love or gifts of Minos to cut off the charmed ringlet, while her father was asleep; and his city, before impregnable, immediately yielded to the arms of the enemy.

(2) “All the men of Lemnos that were able to bear arms had invaded Thrace, and continued the war for three years: their wives, stung with rage and jealousy, formed a horrid design, which they executed the very night on which their husbands returned, to murder every male on the island. Hypsipyle alone saved her father Thoas. Statius has related the whole transaction with his usual spirit, *Theb.* V. l. 70.”—POTTER.

within in the house ? For the third time I call on you to come forth from the house, if the mighty *Æ*gisthus is hospitable to strangers.

SERVANT.

Well ! I hear.—Of what country is the stranger ? whence comes he ?

ORESTES.—Announce me to the rulers of the house, to see whom I have come, and am the bearer of new tidings : but make haste, for the dark chariot of night is also hastening on its way, and it is time that travellers should drop anchor in the abodes of hosts who deny welcome to none. Let some woman, ruling with full authority, come forth from the house : but it were more proper that a man should receive us ; for in such a case the absence of shame in conversation prevents the obscurity of expression : a man speaks with confidence to a man, and signifies with clear certainty his meaning.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Strangers, it is permitted you to speak, if you have need of any thing ; for such things as befit the house are present, both warm baths, and the couch to soothe your toils, and the presence of just eyes. But if it is necessary to transact any other affair of deeper moment, this is the business of men, to whom we will impart your wishes.

ORESTES.—I indeed am a Daulian stranger, from the country of the Phocians ; and as I was going to Argos, bearing my own baggage, after I had set out in this direction on foot, an unknown person whom I met said to me unknown, having asked whether I was bound, and having pointed out the way—Strophius the Phocian (for I learned his name during the conversation) : “ Since for other reasons, O stranger, you are going to Argos, tell to his parents that Orestes is dead ; strictly remembering my words, and by no means let them escape you : whether, therefore, the opinion of his friends shall prevail to carry away the body, or that we should bury him amongst us, for ever a stranger to his home, bring back their commands : for now the sides of the brazen urn contain the

ashes of the man whose death has been bewailed with due rites."—I have now told all that I heard : and if I chance to be speaking to those in power and to his kindred, I know not; but it is fitting that his parents should be informed of what has happened.

ELECTRA.—Ah me, how utterly we are now undone ! O Fiend, that devotest this house to inevitable ruin, how many even of those objects that seemed secured by distance hast thou marked for thy prey, and vanquished from afar with unerring shafts ! Thou hast stripped of every friend me thy unhappy victim. And now Orestes—for his fate had fallen better, preserving his foot from the mire of destruction—now also he for ever blots out the only hope of allaying the guilty phrensy that hath been triumphing in this house.

ORESTES.—I, indeed, to hosts thus blessed by fortune would have wished to have become known, and to have been welcomed by them for the sake of good tidings: for what can be more friendly than the feeling of the guest towards his host ? But I considered it as impious not to fulfil my duty in this matter to my friends, after having given my promise to the one, and being bound by the ties of hospitality to the other.

CLYTEM.—You shall not, in truth, meet with less than you deserve ; nor should you with right have been less dear to this house ; for some other would have come in like manner to announce these tidings. But it is time that strangers who have spent the day in long travel should obtain what their wants require. Conduct him into the hospitable male-apartments of the house, and his attendants, and those that may be travelling along with him ; and there let them meet with a reception worthy of the house. And I recommend you to do this as one from whom an account of his conduct will be required. But we will both impart these things to the rulers of the house, and, not destitute of friends, will resolve ourselves concerning this calamity.

CHORUS.—Say then, ye dear virgins who serve in this house, when shall we put forth the strength of our prayers

for Orestes? O awful earth, and awful confines of the sepulchral mound, which art now laid above the royal body of the leader of the fleet, now hear our supplications! now lend your aid! for now is the time for guileful Persuasion, and for Mercury the conductor of the dead, to descend together, and to guide the dark avenger to these contests of the murderous sword.

SERVANT.—The stranger appears to be working evil. But I see the nurse of Orestes approach, weeping. Whither are you passing, O Gilissa¹, through the gates of the house? But an unbribed² grief is the companion of your way.

NURSE.

My mistress commanded me to call *Ægisthus* as quickly as possible to the strangers, that, having come, the man might more clearly learn from a man the new tidings of this report. Before the domestics, indeed, she suppressed her exultation within eyes of sad seeming³, concealing the joy she felt for deeds that had been perpetrated with good fortune to her, but which are fraught with misery to this house, from the tidings which the strangers have clearly announced. *Ægisthus* without doubt will rejoice in his mind, when he shall have heard the tale. Alas for my unhappy state! How deeply has the accumulation of former intolerable woes, that happened in this house of Atreus, already pained the feelings of my bosom! But never yet have I endured such a suffering as the present. I drained indeed with patience the cup of other ills; but now I have lost the dear Orestes, the chief care of my soul, whom I reared, having received from his mother, being often disturbed in the night by his shrill cries, and having in vain endured many and grievous troubles: for the unthinking infant must be reared, like the young of the flock,

(1) The same personage is called *Arsinoë* by Pindar, *Pyth. Od. XI.* 26.

(2) Or, *genuine*. Dutheil translates it in a different sense, but with his usual elegance: “*La douleur qui vous accompagne, éclate malgré vous.*”

(3) “*At ille, quanquam perfecto voto, prostrato inimico latus ageret, vultu tamen gaudium legit et frontem asseverat, dolorem simulans; et omnia quidem lugentium officia solerter affingit, sed solæ lachrymæ procedere noluerunt.*”—*Apul. Metam. VIII.* p. 156.

(and how otherwise?) by mere guess. For a child, while yet in swaddling-clothes, says nothing, whether hunger or thirst or the call of nature is felt by him, and the belly of the infant consults for its own relief'. Endeavouring to foresee its necessities—but often, I own, deceived, and therefore forced to clean the clothes of the child—the washer and nurse had the same office. But I, performing this double labour, received Orestes to be reared for his father. And now I, wretched, hear that he is dead: and I am going to a man, the author of wrong to this house, who will learn these tidings with joy⁸.

CHORUS.—How, then, does she bid him come prepared?

NURSE.—How do you mean? Speak again, that I may learn more clearly.

CHORUS.—Whether with guards, or alone?

NURSE.—She bids him bring attendants, armed with the spear.

CHORUS.—Do not you now carry this message to our detested master; but desire him to come as quickly as possible, with rejoicing mind, that he may listen without alarm to the tidings; for a faulty message may be set to rights by the bearer.

NURSE.—Are you in your senses to say so, after the news that have been reported?

CHORUS.—But what if Jupiter shall yet grant a happy change from misfortune?

(1) “*αὐτάρκης rectè explicat Schol: ίαυτή δρκεῖν καὶ βοηθεῖν βούλεται, i. e. aliorum aurilium non exspectat, sed ipsa statim sibi sufficit, et facit, qua necessaria videntur.*”—WELLAUER.

(2) Commentators have been so ingenious as to discover that there is a great deal of beauty and nature in this speech; and Schütz, in particular, is excited to rapture by the congenial nonsense of the foolish old Nurse. Of all his tribe, this person has the least of taste or discrimination in his criticism; and the more faulty the passage may be, the louder does he sound his fulsome and worthless praises. The flight of Æschylus, though lofty, was irregular, as every judicious reader must have discovered and lamented. It is vain to deny, that, in attempting to make Gilissa speak in character, he has given her language which is not the language of grief; and has, in consequence, not only violated natural propriety, but has sunk very far beneath the dignity of the tragic vein.

NURSE.—How can it occur? Orestes, the hope of the house, is gone.

CHORUS.—Not yet: even a dull prophet might discern this.

NURSE.—What do you say? Do you know any thing beyond what has been announced?

CHORUS.—Proceed on your errand, and do as you have been desired. Those things are a care to the Gods, for the care of which they may chance to provide.

NURSE.—But I go, and in these particulars will obey your request; and, with the blessing of the Gods, may all turn out for the best!

CHORUS.—O Jupiter, Father of the Olympian Gods, grant, to my request, that I may see my masters searching well after discretion! I have spoken every word with justice. O Jupiter, do thou preserve him, and exalt above his enemies the stranger within the palace! since, if thou raisest him to glory, thou shalt receive, if thou wilt, a double and triple recompence. Think of the orphan young of a beloved hero harnessed in the chariot of afflictions, and prescribe a limit to his course. Oh that one might see the eager bound of the steps that complete it, advancing in measured order over this plain! And ye, who within the house preside over chambers proud of their wealth, hear, ye accordant Gods! Haste, and expiate the blood of those who were slain of old, by a fresh vengeance! Let the ancient murder no longer produce its breed in the house; but oh, do Thou, who dwellest in the mighty cavern of Delphi, grant that the abode of this man may at the same time behold a deed of righteous slaughter, and that when this gloomy veil is removed he may see freely and clearly with his dear eyes! And may the propitious Son of Maia justly aid his cause, and grant a successful issue! Apollo, if he wishes it, will bring to light many other mysteries; for by uttering obscure oracles he brings night and darkness before the eyes, and by day his decrees are not more lucid¹. Then, at last, we will raise with full notes the

(1) It seems strangely out of place in this Chorus, and more particularly in this part of it, to think of taxing even Oracles with obscurity.

female song of triumph, to celebrate the release of this house, and at the same time pour from the lyre of the mourners a strain of sorrow for the dead. Such an issue is fortunate for the State; and my gain, even mine, is increased, and Calamity takes her leave of my friends. But do you with courage, when your share in the deed has arrived, shouting the name of father to her when she exclaims to you 'My child,' complete a just and irreproachable vengeance. Bearing in your breast the heart of Perseus', and performing as a kindness, both to the friends below the earth and those above it, a deed of bitter resentment, inflict a bloody fate on those within the palace, and destroy for ever the wretch who was guilty of the murder.

ÆGISTHUS.

I come indeed not uncalled, but at the bidding of a messenger; and I hear that certain strangers who have arrived report news of an unwelcome¹ nature, even the death of Orestes; for to communicate this to the house would be a new and cruel affliction to a family that is already lacerated and pained by former slaughter. How shall I deem that this intelligence is true and clear? Or do agitated rumours, spread by women, fly abroad², to perish without effect? Which of these would you say was right, so as to prove it to my mind?

CHORUS.—We have heard indeed; but, going within, make your own inquiries of the strangers. The authority of messengers is nothing, compared with the investigation of the facts by a man himself.

ÆGISTHUS.—I wish to see, and again to examine, the messenger, whether he himself was present at the death of Orestes, or whether he speaks from the information of an

(1) See Blomf. Gloss. 817. for a summary of the opinions relative to this expression; none of which, however, including the last and most learned, are entirely satisfactory.

(2) " Ait se non gaudere nuntio de inexpectata morte Orestis: haec loquitur alludens ad piaculum quod contractum fuerat à priore cœde Agamemnonis."—STANLEY.

(3) Literally, " *through the air.*"

obscure report. He will find it impossible to deceive a vigilant mind.

CHORUS.—Jupiter! O Jupiter! what shall I say? whence shall I begin my prayers and vehement appeal to thee? How, speaking from the dictates of my good wishes, shall I obtain by thy favour an equivalent boon? For the bloody deeds of the murderous swords are now about to cause, utterly and for ever, the destruction of the house of Agamemnon; or, kindling fire and flame on the altar for the return of freedom and the beginning of civic rule, he shall regain the mighty wealth of his fathers. Such a conflict is Orestes, waiting singly for the struggle, about to engage in with two; and may his efforts be crowned with victory!

ÆGISTHUS.—Ah! ah! alas! alas!

CHORUS.—Again alas! alas! How is it? how hath the deed been done in the house? Let us stand apart from the completion of the affair, that we may not appear to have had any share in these evils: for the issue of the strife hath now been determined.

SERVANT.—Alas! well I may say alas, on account of my murdered master. Alas! I again repeat with, a third utterance. Ægisthus is no more. But open with all speed, and unbar the chambers of the women. We have need of a very vigorous ally, but not to assist the slain; for what would that avail? Hollo! hollo! I shout to the deaf, and idly exclaim to those who slumber when they ought not. Where is Clytemnestra? what is she about? It seems as if her neck were soon to fall on the edge of the sword, and to be stricken by a just vengeance!

CLYTEM.—What is the matter? Why do you raise this cry in the house?

SERVANT.—I tell you that the dead are slaying the living.

CLYTEM.—Ah me! I understand the meaning of your enigma. We perish by guile, in like manner as we slew. Let some one give me, as quickly as possible, the deadly

axe'. Let us see whether we shall conquer or fall; for to this crisis of misfortune we have come.

ORESTES.—You next I seek: for I have done his business for the other.

CLYTEM.—Ah me! Art thou dead, O dearest Ægisthus?

ORESTES.—Do you love him? If so, you shall lie in the same tomb; and not forsake him, even in death.

CLYTEM.—Restrain your hand, O son! and respect, my child, this breast¹, on which you, often slumbering, sucked with your gums the genial nutriment of its milk.

ORESTES.—Pylades, what shall I do? Shall I suffer my filial reverence to restrain me from slaying my mother?

PYLADES.—What, then, has become of the oracles of Loxias announced from Delphi, and the faith of the oaths which you pledged? Account all as your enemies, rather than the Gods.

ORESTES.—I award the victory to your persuasions; and you advise me well. Follow: I wish to slay you beside the body of Ægisthus; for you preferred him, while he lived, to my father. Sleep, then, with him in death; since you love this man, and hate him whom you ought to love.

CLYTEM.—I nursed your infancy, and with you I wish to pass my age.

ORESTES.—Shall you, after having slain my father, dwell along with me?

(1) “Eandemne intelligemus securim peti à Clytemnestra quâ τὸν ἄνδρα percusserat? atque inde ἀνδροκυῆτα.” ABRESCH. “Ineptum esset quod Abreschio in mentem venit, hic eandem securim intelligere quâ Clytemnestra maritum percusserat. Omnidè est, *Securis. homini occidendo idonea.*” SCHÜTZ. We agree, on the whole, with the latter interpretation, but at the same time there is nothing absurd in the first. If Clytemnestra did not ask for the identical axe with which she had before distinguished herself, she shewed at all events a singular partiality for the weapon.

(2) There is a Greek epigram in which Clytemnestra is made to appeal in similar terms to the natural affections of her son:

Πή ξίφος θύμεις; κατὰ γαστέρος οὐ κατὰ μαζῶν;
Γαστήρ οὐ σ' ἐλάχευσεν, ἀνεθρέψαντο δὲ μαζοί.

CLYTEM.—Fate, O my child, was in part the cause of these things.

ORESTES.—And Fate also has been the cause of the doom that now awaits you.

CLYTEM.—Do you not stand in awe, my child, of the curses of a parent?

ORESTES.—No; for you, who gave me birth, cast me out, to struggle with adversity.

CLYTEM.—I did not cast you out, surely, in sending you to the house of a friend?

ORESTES.—I was sold as a slave to a foreign land, though sprung from a free father.

CLYTEM.—Where, in truth, is the price, which I received in return?

ORESTES.—I am ashamed to taunt you, in plain words, with the just reproach¹.

CLYTEM.—Be not ashamed; but mention also, at the same time, the errors² of your father.

ORESTES.—Do not, sitting in indolence at home, upbraid him who endures the toil.

CLYTEM.—It is a hardship, my son, for women to be debarred from intercourse with a husband.

ORESTES.—It is the labour of the husband, however, which supports them inactive within the house.

CLYTEM.—You appear, my son, as if you were about to slay your mother.

ORESTES.—You in truth, not I, will be the cause of your own death.

CLYTEM.—Think of the issue; beware of the angry Furies of a mother.

ORESTES.—But how shall I escape those of a father, if I forego this deed?

CLYTEM.—I seem, living, to lament in vain to one who is dead³ to my entreaties.

(1) Her intercourse with *Ægisthus*.

(2) “ *M̄eras cūm dicit, concubinarum amores tangit, quibus Agamemnon obnoxius fuerat.* ”—SCHÜTZ.

(3) See Blomfield's Glossary, 913.

ORESTES.—For the fate of my father hastens thy death.

CLYTEM.—Ah me! I have brought forth and nursed a serpent! Too true has been the presage of my fearful dreams.

ORESTES.—Since you slew him, whom you ought to have have spared, you must now suffer a punishment as unmeet¹.

CHORUS.—Let us lament, then, the double calamity, even of this guilty pair. But since the unhappy Orestes has brought a close to many slaughters, we still accept with gratitude that the eye of the house has not utterly perished. Vengeance for the fallen race of Priam has come, though late—a heavy and penal vengeance; and the two lions, the brother warriors, have rushed into the house of Agamemnon. The exile, of whom Apollo prophesied, hath prospered through all his enterprise, having been justly excited to his purpose by the commands of the Gods. Raise, then, the shout of joy for the escape of the royal house from evils, and from the spoliation of its wealth by the polluted pair, its former lamentable fortune. For guileful Punishment, who delights in the assassin strife, hath at length come; and the Daughter of Jove hath in earnest applied her hand to the battle, (well do we mortals denominate her Justice,) breathing against her enemies the wrath of destruction. The God of Oracles, the Parnassian Apollo, who dwells in the mighty cavern of earth amid the steeps of Delphi, at length visits, undisguisedly, her who in disguise wrought the unnatural and murderous deed. The power of Heaven maintains its empire, because it never favours the wicked. It is meet that we should reverence the sway of the Gods²; for we

(1) The remarks of Butler on the previous scene are not unworthy of notice: “Rectius fortè totum hunc dialogum στιχομοθούμενον omississet Noster, habet enim argutias et amarulentam certè criminationem, sed nihil elatum et tragicum, nihil ad terrorem vel misericordiam confictum, que utique summa fuisse modò post v. 907. matrem Orestes intrò abripuisse.”

(2) “ His dictis Orestem apparere fingit Interpres Gallus et apertis regiæ foribus Egisthi et Clytemnestrae cadavera conspici unàque fatalem vestem

may now behold the light; and the mighty chain which bound this house hath been broken. Uplift your heads then, ye palaces; for far too long have ye been prostrate on the ground. Soon shall our full band enter with joy the portals of your dwellings, when unsparing purification shall have cleansed and banished every pollution from the hearth, and it may be the fortune of the mourners to hear and see every thing under more smiling circumstances. The intruders who possessed this house shall fall into a reverse of their prosperity. It is now given us to behold the light.

ORESTES.—Behold the two tyrants of the country, and the murderers of my father, who have laid waste this house! Proud were they in former times, when seated on their thrones; and loving are they even now, as we may conjecture from the state in which they lie; and the oath remains unbroken to their plighted faith. They swore indeed to inflict death on my wretched father, and to perish together themselves; and this catastrophe is in accordance with their oath. But next behold, ye witnesses of these ills, the guileful contrivance, the chain of my unhappy father, both the fetters of his hands and the yoke in which his feet were bound! Extend the fatal robe, and, standing near in a circle, display it to the view, that the Father—not mine, but the Sun, who surveys all these transgressions—may behold the atrocious deeds of my mother; so that he may afterwards appear, in the hour of judgment, to attest, in my behalf, that I have pursued a just vengeance in this death—I mean the death of my mother; for I name not that of *Æ*gisthus, since he has only met, as he deserved, the punishment of an adulterer. But she who devised this hateful snare for a husband from whom she had borne the weight of children beneath her zone—children

vestem adferri, qui irretitus Agamemnon interit. Quibus visis Chorus in illas lætitiae voces erumpit, Παρὰ τὸ φῶς ἰδεῖν. Eleganter hoc quidem, et ex illustrato scenæ apparatu, loco huic difficillimo haud parùm lucis accedit."—BUTLER.

once dear, but now, as it seems, her hostile bane—what think you of her share in the deed? Does she not seem, by reason of her audacity and guilty spirit, to have been a torpedo or viper, able to poison by its touch even an unwounded victim? What shall I call this device, and succeed in giving it a right name?—a snare for a wild beast, or a garment of the bath entangling the feet of the slain?—a net then you might call it, and toils, and robes reaching to the feet. It is such a snare as might be possessed by a robber, who was accustomed to defraud strangers, and to spend his life in plunder; and slaying many in such deceitful toils, he might oft rejoice his mind. May such a wife never be an inmate of my house! but may I sooner perish, by the will of the Gods, without children!

CHORUS.—Alas! alas! for these mournful deeds! Thou hast fallen by a cruel death: but suffering shall also arise to the survivor.

ORESTES.—Was he guilty, or was he innocent of the deed? This robe indeed bears witness to me that the sword of Ægisthus tinged it with this hue; for the stain of blood coincides with the date of the murder, having destroyed the many dyes of the splendid vest. Now do I approve of the deed, and now, with this spectacle before me, I lament it; and addressing this garment, by which my father was slain, I mourn indeed for both the crime and the punishment, and for all this race, feeling how little to be envied is the pollution of such a victory.

CHORUS.—No one of mortals shall pass uninjured through a life exempt from pain; for of sorrows, one visits us immediately, and another will soon come.

ORESTES.—But, that you may know it, I am well aware how this will end. I drive, as if with horses, without the course: for ungovernable thoughts overpower and hurry me away, and terror in my heart is ready to sing and to dance in its phrensy. But while I yet retain my senses, I proclaim to my friends, and assert, that not without justice

I slew a mother, who was polluted with my father's blood and abhorred of the Gods. And I vouch as my incitement to this daring the Pythian God of Oracles, who announced to me, that if I did this deed I should be free from the reproach of guilt: but I will not tell with what punishments he threatened me if I neglected it; for no one can reach by conjecture such sufferings. And now do ye behold me, how, furnished with this suppliant bough and wreath, I am about to repair to the central seats of earth, the plain of Loxias, and the blaze of flame famed as eternal, seeking to escape the pollution of this kindred blood? Apollo commanded me to betake myself to no other shrine. And I call all the Argives to witness, that these evils were dealt out by me after a long lapse of time. But I, a wanderer, and an exile from this land, living and dead shall have this fame—

CHORUS.—But having done well, neither compel your lips to utter words of evil omen, nor presage misfortune. You have freed all the city of the Argives, having successfully cut off the heads of these two serpents.

ORESTES.—Ah! ah! behold them, ye handmaids, clad, like Gorgons, in sable robes, and with many snakes twining in their hair! I can no longer endure the sight!

CHORUS.—What phantoms, O dearest of men to your father, agitate your mind? Command your feelings: do not fear, after triumphing so far.

ORESTES.—They are no unreal phantoms of horror that I behold; for they are manifestly the angry Furies of my mother.

CHORUS.—For the blood is still fresh on your hands, and from this cause distraction assails your mind.

ORESTES.—O king Apollo, their numbers thicken, and they drop loathsome blood from their eyes!

CHORUS.—There are means of purification; and if you seek the aid of Apollo, he will deliver you from these horrors.

ORESTES.—You, indeed, do not behold them; but I behold

them, and am driven away by them, and can no longer remain'.

CHORUS.—But may you be fortunate! and may the God, propitiously regarding you, defend your safety in these deadly calamities! This third storm that hath blown on the race of this royal house hath at length ceased. The devouring of his children by the wretched Thyestes was the first beginning of its sorrows. Next came the sufferings of our royal lord, and the warlike leader of the Greeks perished in the bloody bath. But now there hath come from some quarter a third preserver—or shall I not rather call him a destroyer? Where in truth will calamity cease, or where extinguish its fury in repose?

(1) Aut Agamemnonius scenis agitatus Orestes,
Armatam facibus matrem et serpentibus atris
Cùm fugit, ultricesque sedent in limine Diræ.

Virg. Æn. IV. 471.

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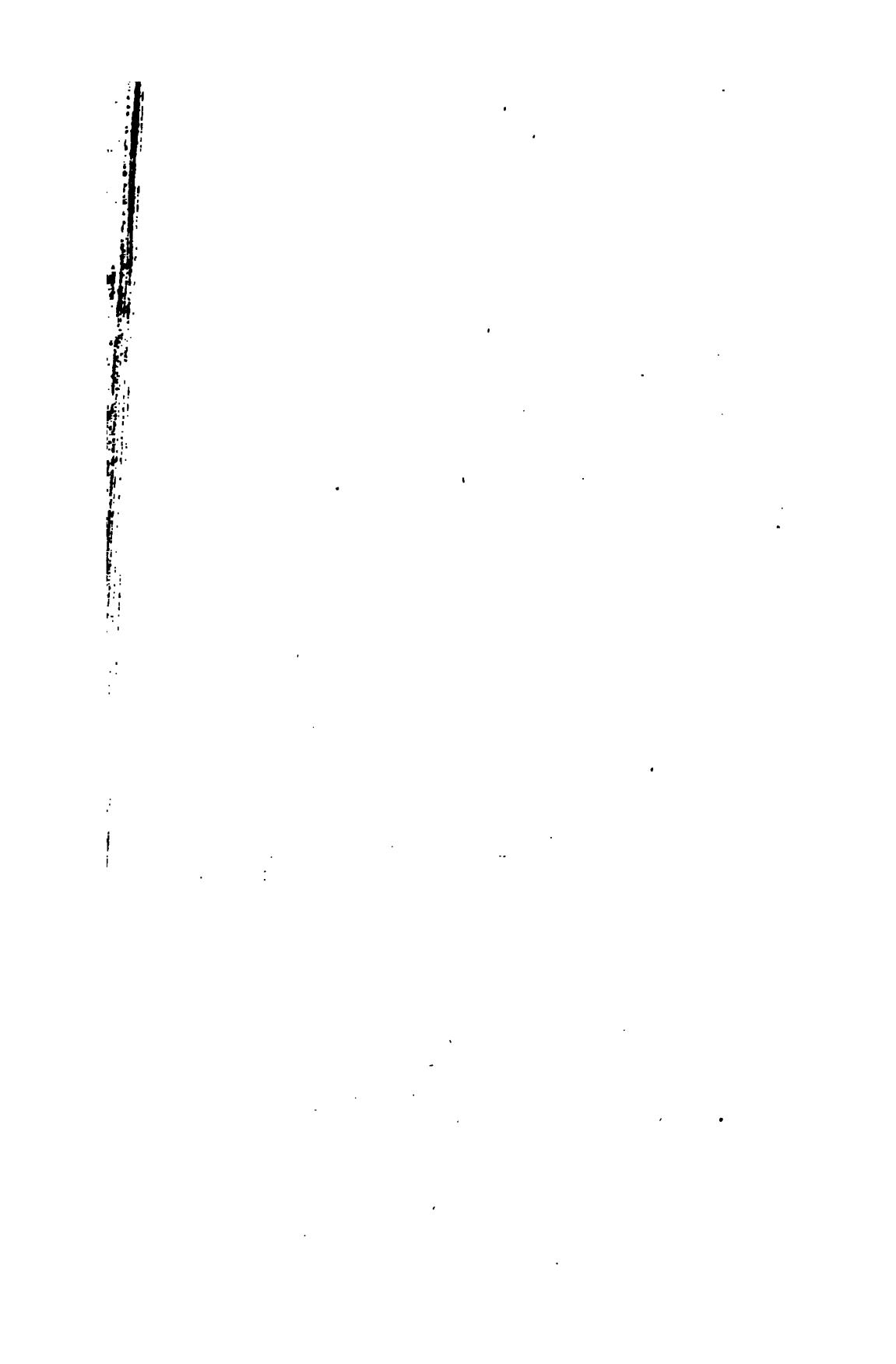
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